



ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

*From a pen-drawing by
E. Heber Thompson*

Modern Short Stories

Collected by

JOHN BUCHAN

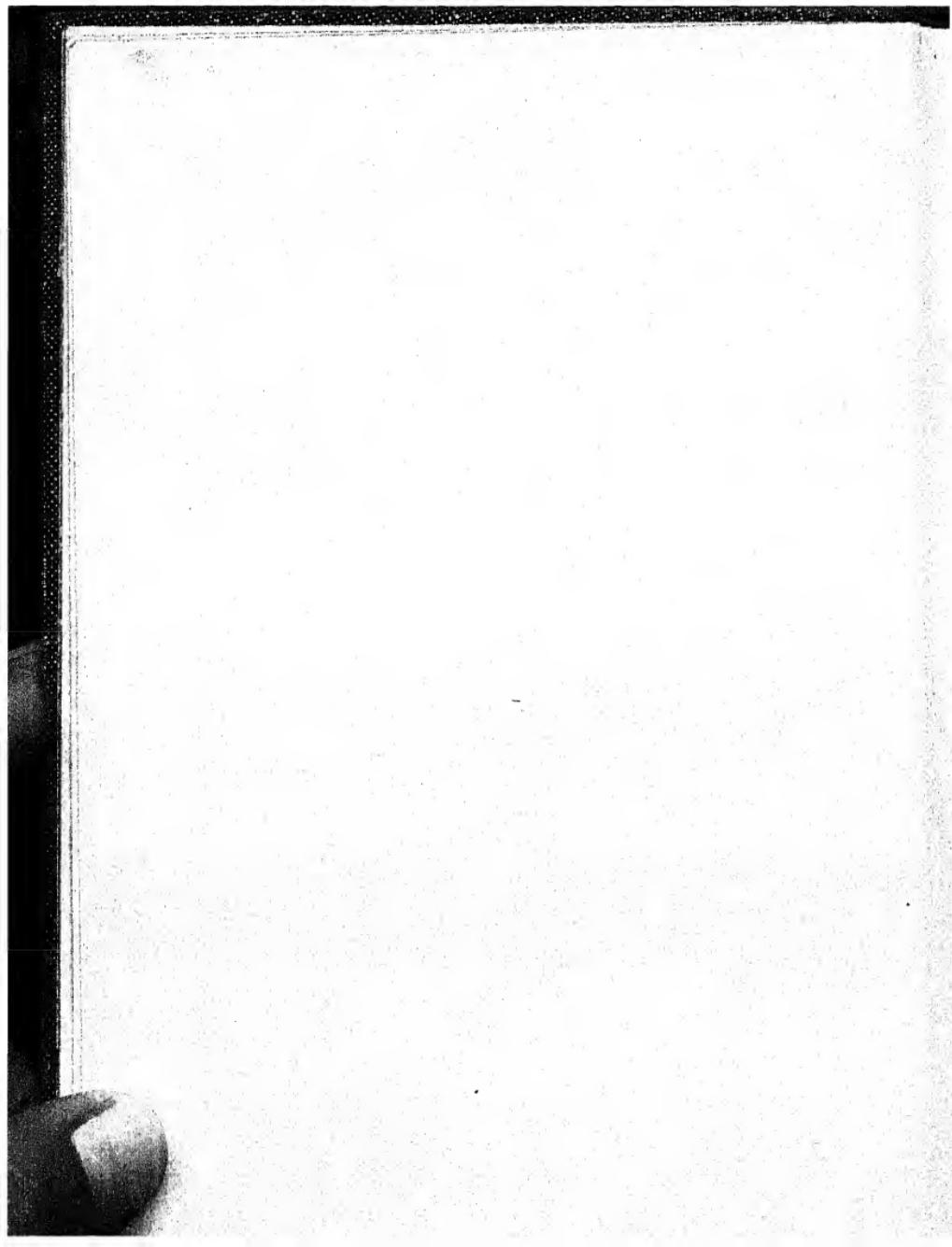


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INTRODUCTION

THE short story is a literary type with a venerable ancestry, but it is only within comparatively recent years that it has become a popular form. We find the short interpolated tale in Sir Walter Scott and Dickens, and James Hogg, in his *Ettrick Shepherd's Tales*, tried his prentice hand at it. But the true parents of the modern short story were American—Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe. They and their French disciples developed a form in which a single episode is presented in a high light, detached from the elaborate background of the novel; and in the last fifty years we have seen as rich a harvest gathered in this field as in any province of literature. America has given us Henry James and Edith Wharton, Ambrose Bierce and O. Henry; France has Daudet, Maupassant, Flaubert, Anatole France—to name only the kings of the craft; from Russia we have Turgenev and Tolstoi and Tchekov; while in England (to select arbitrarily) we have R. L. Stevenson, Joseph Conrad, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Kipling, and Mr. Wells.

The subject-matter of the short story is as wide as life itself, and there are infinite varieties of the form. But while it is a city containing many mansions, each must obey one supreme architectural law. A short story is not a short novel; there is a difference of quality as well as of size between "Wandering Willie's Tale" and *The Bride of Lammermoor*, between "Youth" and *Victory*, between "The Turn of the

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Screw" and *The Tragic Muse*. It must deal with a single episode, the *motif* must be narrowed so as to admit of a sharp definition, the impression upon the reader should be not of a piece of life portrayed in all its catholicity and variousness, but of life seen in a dramatic moment. Its parallel in poetry is lyric concentration as contrasted with epic expansion.

The neighbours of the short story in the literature map are the novel and the essay, and consequently we find specimens which dwell on the frontiers and have affinities across the border line. At one extreme there is the tale which comes very near to the novel in complexity of incident, which, like the novel, may cover a considerable tract of time and present many characters. Such full-bodied short stories are perhaps less in fashion to-day; but they are legitimate members of the class, for their purpose differs radically from that of the novel. They offer a sudden glimpse rather than a slow and steady illumination. They give a single act of a play, without prologue or epilogue. They provoke, disquiet, stimulate, but they do not attempt to satisfy the emotions which they arouse. Above all they provide a single dramatic and significant moment to which all else is subordinate. Take three famous examples—Flaubert's "Un Coeur Simple," Scott's "Wandering Willie's Tale," and Joseph Conrad's "The Heart of Darkness." One is a study of a peasant woman's life culminating in an exquisite piece of fancy, one a tale of *diablerie*, one an ironic contrast between domesticity and savagery. No one is a novel in miniature, for each elaborates and mounts in a high light a single episode. But sometimes the professed novel may be in essence a short story, like Mr. Conrad's *Typhoon*.

At the other extreme the narrative interest is of the slenderest, and the story is first cousin to the essay. The French *conte* in the hands of Maupassant became a means of catching the most evanescent moods and

the subtlest ironies. The whole of an incident in such tales may take place in the mind without physical action, but incident, narrative, of some kind, must be there. Such a form gives to fiction the opportunity of fixing impressions as vague as a scent or a strain of music, of giving a local habitation and a name to the airiest fancies. Such are some of the best work of Tchekov, and in our own country of Katherine Mansfield. From the slenderest and simplest materials cosmic drama may be evolved, and the emotional effect may be that of a great lyric.

For certain subjects the short story is the best, indeed, the only possible form. A single dramatic incident, complete in itself, is only weakened by the surplusage of the conventional novel. Or a topic may be in itself so fantastic and evasive that an elaborate handling would strip it of its glamour. The supernatural, the uncanny, the inexplicable become commonplace if there is too great a condescension upon detail. The Provost of Eton's "Ghost Stories of an Antiquary" would not bear amplifying. Take Henry James's "The Turn of the Screw," which is perhaps the best ghost story ever written, and consider how shorn it would be of its terror if it had been expanded into a novel. Indeed, I do not believe that a novel of *diablerie* is possible ; the thing, to convince, must be a page torn from a book, not the rounded volume. I think this is also true of attempts to reconstruct the life of a remote past. The full-bodied historical novel, except very rarely in the hands of a master, is apt to suffer from *longueurs*, and to have the effect of a tapestry rather than of a picture ; but the short story may capture the full flavour of old days just because its detail can be rigorously selected, and because there is no obligation to elaborate the unfamiliar. Take such a masterpiece as Anatole France's "*Le Procureur de Judée*." A novel on the later years of Pontius Pilate would be a dull and difficult business,

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but in the French tale the two old Roman officers talking at dinner of their youth in the East—the one who has become a by-word utterly forgetful of the incident which has given him his fame, trying vainly to remember the name of the Jewish demagogue whom he had punished—in that picture and the final “*Je ne me rappelle pas*” we have at once an ironic interpretation of history and a profound criticism of life.

It is a pleasant game to make lists of the world's great short stories. In English literature we can at least be certain about the chief masters of the form from Scott to Mr. Kipling. It is harder to select the best examples. If I had to choose a dozen I should take them from the more full-bodied type, for it seems to me that that type better suits our national genius. My list would be, I think, Scott's “Wandering Willie's Tale,” Poe's “Fall of the House of Usher” and the “Cask of Amontillado,” Stevenson's “Thrawn Janet” and “The Merry Men,” Henry James's “The Turn of the Screw,” Conrad's “Heart of Darkness” and “Youth,” Mr. Kipling's “The Man who would be King,” “The Finest Story in the World” and “An Habitation Enforced,” and Mr. Wells's “The Door in the Wall.” The present selection contains none of these masterpieces, but it is designed to show the variety of which the form is capable—Mr. Morley Roberts's brisk incident; Mr. Neil Munro's historical reconstruction; “Q.'s” skilfully created atmosphere; the fantasy of Stevenson and Mr. St. John Lucas, and the disquieting strangeness of “The Road from Colonus.”

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Row 63

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"Stories to rede are delitable,
Altho' that they be noght but fabil."

JOHN BARBOUR: *The Brus.*

MODERN SHORT STORIES

THE BOTTLE IMP

(ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON)

THERE was a man of the island of Hawaii, whom I shall call Keawe; for the truth is, he still lives, and his name must be kept secret; but the place of his birth was not far from Honaunau, where the bones of Keawe the Great lie hidden in a cave. This man was poor, brave, and active; he could read and write like a schoolmaster; he was a first-rate mariner besides, sailed for some time in the island steamers, and steered a whaleboat on the Hamakua coast. At length it came in Keawe's mind to have a sight of the great world and foreign cities, and he shipped on a vessel bound to San Francisco.

This is a fine town, with a fine harbour, and rich people uncountable; and, in particular, there is one hill which is covered with palaces. Upon this hill Keawe was one day taking a walk, with his pocket full of money, viewing the great houses upon either hand with pleasure. "What fine houses there are!" he was thinking, "and how happy must these people be who dwell in them, and take no care for the morrow!" The thought was in his mind when he came abreast of a house that was smaller than some others, but all finished and beautified like a toy; the steps of that house shone like silver, and the borders of the garden bloomed like garlands, and the windows

were bright like diamonds ; and Keawe stopped and wondered at the excellence of all he saw. So stopping, he was aware of a man that looked forth upon him through a window, so clear that Keawe could see him as you see a fish in a pool upon the reef. The man was elderly, with a bald head and a black beard ; and his face was heavy with sorrow, and he bitterly sighed. And the truth of it is, that as Keawe looked in upon the man, and the man looked out upon Keawe, each envied the other.

All of a sudden the man smiled and nodded, and beckoned Keawe to enter, and met him at the door of the house.

" This is a fine house of mine," said the man, and bitterly sighed. " Would you not care to view the chambers ? "

So he led Keawe all over it, from the cellar to the roof, and there was nothing there that was not perfect of its kind, and Keawe was astonished.

" Truly," said Keawe, " this is a beautiful house ; if I lived in the like of it, I should be laughing all day long. How comes it, then, that you should be sighing ? "

" There is no reason," said the man, " why you should not have a house in all points similar to this, and finer, if you wish. You have some money, I suppose ? "

" I have fifty dollars," said Keawe ; " but a house like this will cost more than fifty dollars."

The man made a computation. " I am sorry you have no more," said he, " for it may raise you trouble in the future ; but it shall be yours at fifty dollars."

" The house ? " asked Keawe.

" No, not the house," replied the man ; " but the bottle. For I must tell you, although I appear to you so rich and fortunate, all my fortune, and this house itself and its garden, came out of a bottle not much bigger than a pint. This is it."

And he opened a lockfast place, and took out a round-bellied bottle with a long neck ; the glass of it was white like milk, with changing rainbow colours in the grain. Withinsides something obscurely moved, like a shadow and a fire.

" This is the bottle," said the man ; and, when Keawe laughed, " You do not believe me ? " he added. " Try, then, for yourself. See if you can break it."

So Keawe took the bottle up and dashed it on the floor till he was weary ; but it jumped on the floor like a child's ball, and was not injured.

" This is a strange thing," said Keawe. " For by the touch of it, as well as by the look, the bottle should be of glass."

" Of glass it is," replied the man, sighing more heavily than ever ; " but the glass of it was tempered in the flames of hell. An imp lives in it, and that is the shadow we behold there moving ; or, so I suppose. If any man buy this bottle the imp is at his command ; all that he desires—love, fame, money, houses like this house, ay, or a city like this city—all are his at the word uttered. Napoleon had this bottle, and by it he grew to be the king of the world ; but he sold it at the last and fell. Captain Cook had this bottle, and by it he found his way to so many islands ; but he too sold it, and was slain upon Hawaii. For, once it is sold, the power goes and the protection ; and unless a man remain content with what he has, ill will befall him."

" And yet you talk of selling it yourself ? " Keawe said.

" I have all I wish, and I am growing elderly," replied the man. " There is one thing the imp cannot do—he cannot prolong life ; and it would not be fair to conceal from you there is a drawback to the bottle ; for if a man die before he sells it, he must burn in hell for ever."

"To be sure, that is a drawback and no mistake," cried Keawe. "I would not meddle with the thing. I can do without a house, thank God; but there is one thing I could not be doing with one particle, and that is to be damned."

"Dear me, you must not run away with things," returned the man. "All you have to do is to use the power of the imp in moderation, and then sell it to some one else, as I do to you, and finish your life in comfort."

"Well, I observe two things," said Keawe. "All the time you keep sighing like a maid in love—that is one; and for the other, you sell this bottle very cheap."

"I have told you already why I sigh," said the man. "It is because I fear my health is breaking up; and, as you said yourself, to die and go to the devil is a pity for any one. As for why I sell so cheap, I must explain to you there is a peculiarity about the bottle. Long ago, when the devil brought it first upon earth, it was extremely expensive, and was sold first of all to Prester John for many millions of dollars; but it cannot be sold at all, unless sold at a loss. If you sell it for as much as you paid for it, back it comes to you again like a homing pigeon. It follows that the price has kept falling in these centuries, and the bottle is now remarkably cheap. I bought it myself from one of my great neighbours on this hill, and the price I paid was only ninety dollars. I could sell it for as high as eighty-nine dollars and ninety-nine cents, but not a penny dearer, or back the thing must come to me. Now, about this there are two bothers. First, when you offer a bottle so singular for eighty-odd dollars, people suppose you to be jesting. And second—but there is no hurry about that—and I need not go into it. Only remember it must be coined money that you sell it for."

"How am I to know that this is all true?" asked Keawe.

"Some of it you can try at once," replied the man. "Give me your fifty dollars, take the bottle, and wish your fifty dollars back into your pocket. If that does not happen, I pledge you my honour I will cry off the bargain and restore your money."

"You are not deceiving me?" said Keawe.

The man bound himself with a great oath.

"Well, I will risk that much," said Keawe, "for that can do no harm," and he paid over his money to the man, and the man handed him the bottle.

"Imp of the bottle," said Keawe, "I want my fifty dollars back." And sure enough, he had scarce said the word before his pocket was as heavy as ever.

"To be sure this is a wonderful bottle," said Keawe.

"And now good-morning to you, my fine fellow, and the devil go with you for me," said the man.

"Hold on," said Keawe, "I don't want any more of this fun. Here, take your bottle back."

"You have bought it for less than I paid for it," replied the man, rubbing his hands. "It is yours now; and, for my part, I am only concerned to see the back of you." And with that he rang for his Chinese servant, and had Keawe shown out of the house.

Now, when Keawe was in the street, with the bottle under his arm, he began to think. "If all is true about this bottle, I may have made a losing bargain," thinks he. "But perhaps the man was only fooling me." The first thing he did was to count his money; the sum was exact—forty-nine dollars American money, and one Chili piece. "That looks like the truth," said Keawe. "Now I will try another part."

The streets in that part of the city were as clean as a ship's decks, and though it was noon, there were no passengers. Keawe set the bottle in the gutter and walked away. Twice he looked back, and there

was the milky, round-bellied bottle where he left it. A third time he looked back and turned a corner; but he had scarce done so, when something knocked upon his elbow, and behold! it was the long neck sticking up; and as for the round belly, it was jammed into the pocket of his pilot-coat.

"And that looks like the truth," said Keawe.

The next thing he did was to buy a corkscrew in a shop, and go apart into a secret place in the fields. And there he tried to draw the cork, but as often as he put the screw in, out it came again, and the cork was as whole as ever.

"This is some new sort of cork," said Keawe, and all at once he began to shake and sweat, for he was afraid of that bottle.

On his way back to the port-side he saw a shop where a man sold shells and clubs from the wild islands, old heathen deities, old coined money, pictures from China and Japan, and all manner of things that sailors bring in their sea-chests. And here he had an idea. So he went in and offered the bottle for a hundred dollars. The man of the shop laughed at him at first, and offered him five; but, indeed, it was a curious bottle, such glass was never blown in any human glass-works, so prettily the colours shone under the milky white, and so strangely the shadow hovered in the midst; so, after he had disputed a while after the manner of his kind, the shopman gave Keawe sixty silver dollars for the thing and set it on a shelf in the midst of his window.

"Now," said Keawe, "I have sold that for sixty which I bought for fifty—or, to say truth, a little less, because one of my dollars was from Chili. Now I shall know the truth upon another point."

So he went back on board his ship, and when he opened his chest, there was the bottle, which had come more quickly than himself. Now Keawe had a mate on board whose name was Lopaka.

"What ails you," said Lopaka, "that you stare in your chest?"

They were alone in the ship's forecastle, and Keawe bound him to secrecy, and told all.

"This is a very strange affair," said Lopaka; "and I fear you will be in trouble about this bottle. But there is one point very clear—that you are sure of the trouble, and you had better have the profit in the bargain. Make up your mind what you want with it; give the order, and if it is done as you desire, I will buy the bottle myself; for I have an idea of my own to get a schooner, and go trading through the islands."

"That is not my idea," said Keawe; "but to have a beautiful house and garden on the Kona coast, where I was born, the sun shining in at the door, flowers in the garden, glass in the windows, pictures on the walls, and toys and fine carpets on the tables, for all the world like the house I was in this day—only a story higher, and with balconies all about like the King's palace; and to live there without care and make merry with my friends and relatives."

"Well," said Lopaka, "let us carry it back with us to Hawaii; and if all comes true as you suppose, I will buy the bottle, as I said, and ask a schooner."

Upon that they were agreed, and it was not long before the ship returned to Honolulu, carrying Keawe and Lopaka, and the bottle. They were scarce come ashore when they met a friend upon the beach, who began at once to condole with Keawe.

"I do not know what I am to be condoled about," said Keawe.

"Is it possible you have not heard," said the friend, "your uncle—that good old man—is dead, and your cousin—that beautiful boy—was drowned at sea?"

Keawe was filled with sorrow, and, beginning to weep and to lament, he forgot about the bottle. But Lopaka was thinking to himself, and presently, when Keawe's grief was a little abated, "I have been think-

ing," said Lopaka, "had not your uncle lands in Hawaii, in the district of Kaü?"

"No," said Keawe, "not in Kaü: they are on the mountain side—a little be-south Hookena."

"These lands will now be yours?" asked Lopaka.

"And so they will," says Keawe, and began again to lament for his relatives.

"No," said Lopaka, "do not lament at present. I have a thought in my mind. How if this should be the doing of the bottle? For here is the place ready for your house."

"If this be so," cried Keawe, "it is a very ill way to serve me by killing my relatives. But it may be, indeed; for it was in just such a station that I saw the house with my mind's eye."

"The house, however, is not yet built," said Lopaka.

"No, nor like to be!" said Keawe; "for though my uncle has some coffee and ava and bananas, it will not be more than will keep me in comfort; and the rest of that land is the black lava."

"Let us go to the lawyer," said Lopaka; "I have still this idea in my mind."

Now, when they came to the lawyer's, it appeared Keawe's uncle had grown monstrous rich in the last days, and there was a fund of money.

"And here is the money for the house!" cried Lopaka.

"If you are thinking of a new house," said the lawyer, "here is the card of a new architect of whom they tell me great things."

"Better and better!" cried Lopaka. "Here is all made plain for us. Let us continue to obey orders."

So they went to the architect, and he had drawings of houses on his table.

"You want something out of the way," said the architect. "How do you like this?" and he handed a drawing to Keawe.

Now, when Keawe set eyes on the drawing, he cried out aloud, for it was the picture of his thought exactly drawn.

"I am in for this house," thought he. "Little as I like the way it comes to me, I am in for it now, and I may as well take the good along with the evil."

So he told the architect all that he wished, and how he would have that house furnished, and about the pictures on the wall and the knick-knacks on the tables ; and he asked the man plainly for how much he would undertake the whole affair.

The architect put many questions, and took his pen and made a computation ; and when he had done he named the very sum that Keawe had inherited.

Lopaka and Keawe looked at one another and nodded.

"It is quite clear," thought Keawe, "that I am to have this house, whether or no. It comes from the devil, and I fear I will get little good by that ; and of one thing I am sure, I will make no more wishes as long as I have this bottle. But with the house I am saddled, and I may as well take the good along with the evil."

So he made his terms with the architect, and they signed a paper ; and Keawe and Lopaka took ship again and sailed to Australia ; for it was concluded between them they should not interfere at all, but leave the architect and the bottle imp to build and to adorn the house at their own pleasure.

The voyage was a good voyage, only all the time Keawe was holding in his breath, for he had sworn he would utter no more wishes, and take no more favours, from the devil. The time was up when they got back. The architect told them that the house was ready, and Keawe and Lopaka took a passage in the *Hall*, and went down Kona way to view the house, and see if all had been done fitly according to the thought that was in Keawe's mind.

Now, the house stood on the mountain side, visible to ships. Above, the forest ran up into the clouds of rain ; below, the black lava fell in cliffs, where the kings of old lay buried. A garden bloomed about the house with every hue of flowers ; and there was an orchard of papaia on the one hand and an orchard of bread-fruit on the other, and right in front, towards the sea, a ship's mast had been rigged up and bore a flag. As for the house, it was three stories high, with great chambers and broad balconies on each. The windows were of glass, so excellent that it was as clear as water and as bright as day. All manner of furniture adorned the chambers. Pictures hung upon the wall in golden frames—pictures of ships, and men fighting, and of the most beautiful women, and of singular places ; nowhere in the world are there pictures of so bright a colour as those Keawe found hanging in his house. As for the knick-knacks, they were extraordinarily fine : chiming clocks and musical boxes, little men with nodding heads, books filled with pictures, weapons of price from all quarters of the world, and the most elegant puzzles to entertain the leisure of a solitary man. And as no one would care to live in such chambers, only to walk through and view them, the balconies were made so broad that a whole town might have lived upon them in delight ; and Keawe knew not which to prefer, whether the back porch, where you get the land breeze and looked upon the orchards and the flowers, or the front balcony, where you could drink the wind of the sea, and look down the steep wall of the mountain and see the *Hall* going by once a week or so between Hookena and the hills of Pele, or the schooners plying up the coast for wood and ava and bananas.

When they had viewed all, Keawe and Lopaka sat on the porch.

" Well," asked Lopaka, " is it all as you designed ? "

" Words cannot utter it," said Keawe. " It is

better than I dreamed, and I am sick with satisfaction."

"There is but one thing to consider," said Lopaka; "all this may be quite natural, and the bottle imp have nothing whatever to say to it. If I were to buy the bottle, and got no schooner after all, I should have put my hand in the fire for nothing. I gave you my word, I know; but yet I think you would not grudge me one more proof."

"I have sworn I would take no more favours," said Keawe. "I have gone already deep enough."

"This is no favour I am thinking of," replied Lopaka. "It is only to see the imp himself. There is nothing to be gained by that, and so nothing to be ashamed of, and yet, if I once saw him, I should be sure of the whole matter. So indulge me so far, and let me see the imp; and, after that, here is the money in my hand, and I will buy it."

"There is only one thing I am afraid of," said Keawe. "The imp may be very ugly to view, and if you once set eyes upon him you might be very undesirous of the bottle."

"I am a man of my word," said Lopaka. "And here is the money betwixt us."

"Very well," replied Keawe, "I have a curiosity myself. So come, let us have one look at you, Mr. Imp."

Now as soon as that was said, the imp looked out of the bottle, and in again, swift as a lizard; and there sat Keawe and Lopaka turned to stone. The night had quite come, before either found a thought to say or voice to say it with; and then Lopaka pushed the money over and took the bottle.

"I am a man of my word," said he, "and had need to be so, or I would not touch this bottle with my foot. Well, I shall get my schooner and a dollar or two for my pocket; and then I will be rid of this

devil as fast as I can. For to tell you the plain truth, the look of him has cast me down."

"Lopaka," said Keawe, "do not you think any worse of me than you can help; I know it is night, and the roads bad, and the pass by the tombs an ill place to go by so late, but I declare since I have seen that little face, I cannot eat or sleep or pray till it is gone from me. I will give you a lantern, and a basket to put the bottle in, and any picture or fine thing in all my house that takes your fancy; and be gone at once, and go sleep at Hookena with Nahinu."

"Keawe," said Lopaka, "many a man would take this ill; above all, when I am doing you a turn so friendly, as to keep my word and buy the bottle; and for that matter, the night and the dark, and the way by the tombs, must be all tenfold more dangerous to a man with such a sin upon his conscience and such a bottle under his arm. But for my part, I am so extremely terrified myself, I have not the heart to blame you. Here I go, then; and I pray God you may be happy in your house, and I fortunate with my schooner, and both get to heaven in the end in spite of the devil and his bottle."

So Lopaka went down the mountain; and Keawe stood in his front balcony, and listened to the clink of the horses' shoes, and watched the lantern go shining down the path, and along the cliff of caves where the old dead are buried; and all the time he trembled and clasped his hands, and prayed for his friend, and gave glory to God that he himself was escaped out of that trouble.

But the next day came very brightly, and that new house of his was so delightful to behold that he forgot his terrors. One day followed another, and Keawe dwelt there in perpetual joy. He had his place on the back porch; it was there he ate and lived, and read the stories in the Honolulu newspapers;

but when any one came by they would go in and view the chambers and the pictures. And the fame of the house went far and wide ; it was called *Ka-Hale Nui*—the Great House—in all Kona ; and sometimes the Bright House, for Keawe kept a Chinaman, who was all day dusting and furbishing ; and the glass, and the gilt, and the fine stuffs, and the pictures, shone as bright as the morning. As for Keawe himself, he could not walk in the chambers without singing, his heart was so enlarged ; and when ships sailed by upon the sea, he would fly his colours on the mast.

So time went by, until one day Keawe went upon a visit as far as Kailua to certain of his friends. There he was well feasted ; and left as soon as he could the next morning, and rode hard, for he was impatient to behold his beautiful house ; and, besides, the night then coming on was the night in which the dead of old days go abroad in the sides of Kona ; and having already meddled with the devil, he was the more chary of meeting with the dead. A little beyond Honaunau, looking far ahead, he was aware of a woman bathing in the edges of the sea ; and she seemed a well-grown girl, but he thought no more of it. Then he saw her white shift flutter as she put it on, and then her red holoku ; and by the time he came abreast of her she was done with her toilet, and had come up from the sea, and stood by the track-side in her red holoku, and she was all freshened with the bath, and her eyes shone and were kind. Now Keawe no sooner beheld her than he drew rein.

"I thought I knew every one in this country," said he. "How comes it that I do not know you?"

"I am Kokua, daughter of Kiano," said the girl, "and I have just returned from Oahu. Who are you?"

"I will tell you who I am in a little," said Keawe,

dismounting from his horse, "but not now. For I have a thought in my mind, and if you knew who I was, you might have heard of me, and would not give me a true answer. But tell me, first of all, one thing : are you married ? "

At this Kokua laughed out aloud. "It is you who ask questions," she said. "Are you married yourself ? "

"Indeed, Kokua, I am not," replied Keawe, "and never thought to be until this hour. But here is the plain truth. I have met you here at the roadside, and I saw your eyes, which are like the stars, and my heart went to you as swift as a bird. And so now, if you want none of me, say so, and I will go on to my own place ; but if you think me no worse than any other young man, say so, too, and I will turn aside to your father's for the night, and to-morrow I will talk with the good man."

Kokua said never a word, but she looked at the sea and laughed.

"Kokua," said Keawe, "if you say nothing, I will take that for the good answer ; so let us be stepping to your father's door."

She went on ahead of him, still without speech ; only sometimes she glanced back and glanced away again, and she kept the strings of her hat in her mouth.

Now, when they had come to the door, Kiano came out on his veranda, and cried out and welcomed Keawe by name. At that the girl looked over, for the fame of the great house had come to her ears ; and, to be sure, it was a great temptation. All that evening they were very merry together ; and the girl was as bold as brass under the eyes of her parents, and made a mark of Keawe, for she had a quick wit. The next day he had a word with Kiano, and found the girl alone.

"Kokua," said he, "you made a mark of me all

the evening ; and it is still time to bid me go. I would not tell you who I was, because I have so fine a house, and I feared you would think too much of that house and too little of the man that loves you. Now you know all, and if you wish to have seen the last of me, say so at once."

" No," said Kokua, but this time she did not laugh, nor did Keawe ask for more.

This was the wooing of Keawe ; things had gone quickly ; but so an arrow goes, and the ball of a rifle swifter still, and yet both may strike the target. Things had gone fast, but they had gone far also, and the thought of Keawe rang in the maiden's head ; she heard his voice in the breach of the surf upon the lava, and for this young man that she had seen but twice she would have left father and mother and her native islands. As for Keawe himself, his horse flew up the path of the mountain under the cliff of tombs, and the sound of the hoofs, and the sound of Keawe singing to himself for pleasure, echoed in the caverns of the dead. He came to the Bright House, and still he was singing. He sat and ate in the broad balcony, and the Chinaman wondered at his master, to hear how he sang between the mouthfuls. The sun went down into the sea, and the night came ; and Keawe walked the balconies by lamplight, high on the mountains, and the voice of his singing started men on ships.

" Here am I now upon my high place," he said to himself. " Life may be no better ; this is the mountain top ; and all shelves about me towards the worse. For the first time I will light up the chambers, and bathe in my fine bath with the hot water and the cold, and sleep above in the bed of my bridal chamber."

So the Chinaman had word, and he must rise from sleep and light the furnaces ; and as he walked below, beside the boilers, he heard his master singing and rejoicing above him in the lighted chambers. When

the water began to be hot the Chinaman cried to his master : and Keawe went into the bathroom ; and the Chinaman heard him sing as he filled the marble basin ; and heard him sing, and the singing broken, as he undressed ; until of a sudden, the song ceased. The Chinaman listened, and listened ; he called up the house to Keawe to ask if all were well, and Keawe answered him " Yes," and bade him go to bed ; but there was no more singing in the Bright House ; and all night long the Chinaman heard his master's feet go round and round the balconies without repose.

Now, the truth of it was this : as Keawe undressed for his bath, he spied upon his flesh a patch like a patch of lichen on a rock, and it was then that he stopped singing. For he knew the likeness of that patch, and knew that he was fallen in the Chinese Evil.*

Now, it is a sad thing for any man to fall into this sickness. And it would be a sad thing for any one to leave a house so beautiful and so commodious, and depart from all his friends to the north coast of Molokai, between the mighty cliff and the sea-breakers. But what was that to the case of the man Keawe, he who had met his love but yesterday and won her but that morning, and now saw all his hopes break, in a moment, like a piece of glass ?

A while he sat upon the edge of the bath, then sprang, with a cry, and ran outside ; and to and fro, to and fro, along the balcony, like one despairing.

" Very willingly could I leave Hawaii, the home of my fathers," Keawe was thinking. " Very lightly could I leave my house, the high-placed, the many-windowed, here upon the mountains. Very bravely could I go to Molokai, to Kalaupapa by the cliffs, to live with the smitten and to sleep there, far from my fathers. But what wrong have I done, what sin

* Leprosy.

lies upon my soul, that I should have encountered Kokua coming cool from the sea-water in the evening ? Kokua, the soul ensnarer ! Kokua, the light of my life ! Her may I never wed, her may I look upon no longer, her may I no more handle with my loving hand ; and it is for this, it is for you, O Kokua ! that I pour my lamentations ! ”

Now you are to observe what sort of a man Keawe was, for he might have dwelt there in the Bright House for years, and no one been the wiser of his sickness ; but he reckoned nothing of that, if he must lose Kokua. And again he might have wed Kokua even as he was ; and so many would have done, because they have the souls of pigs ; but Keawe loved the maid manfully, and he would do her no hurt and bring her in no danger.

A little beyond the midst of the night, there came in his mind the recollection of that bottle. He went round to the back porch, and called to memory the day when the devil had looked forth ; and at the thought ice ran in his veins.

“ A dreadful thing is the bottle,” thought Keawe, “ and dreadful is the imp, and it is a dreadful thing to risk the flames of hell. But what other hope have I to cure my sickness or to wed Kokua ? What ! ” he thought, “ would I beard the devil once, only to get me a house, and not face him again to win Kokua ? ”

Thereupon he called to mind it was the next day the *Hall* went by on her return to Honolulu. “ There must I go first,” he thought, “ and see Lopaka. For the best hope that I have now is to find that same bottle I was so pleased to be rid of.”

Never a wink could he sleep ; the food stuck in his throat ; but he sent a letter to Kiano, and about the time when the steamer would be coming, rode down beside the cliff of the tombs. It rained ; his horse went heavily ; he looked up at the black

mouths of the caves, and he envied the dead that slept there and were done with trouble ; and called to mind how he had galloped by the day before, and was astonished. So he came down to Hookena, and there was all the country gathered for the steamer as usual. In the shed before the store they sat and jested and passed the news ; but there was no matter of speech in Keawe's bosom, and he sat in their midst and looked without on the rain falling on the houses, and the surf beating among the rocks, and the sighs arose in his throat.

"Keawe of the Bright House is out of spirits," said one to another. Indeed, and so he was, and little wonder.

Then the *Hall* came, and the whale-boat carried him on board. The after-part of the ship was full of Haoles *—who had been to visit the volcano, as their custom is ; and the midst was crowned with Kanakas, and the forepart with wild bulls from Hilo and horses from Kaü ; but Keawe sat apart from all in his sorrow, and watched for the house of Kiano. There it sat low upon the shore in the black rocks, and shaded by the cocoa-palms, and there by the door was a red holoku, no greater than a fly, and going to and fro with a fly's busyness. "Ah, queen of my heart," he cried, "I'll venture my dear soul to win you ! "

Soon after darkness fell and the cabins were lit up, and the Haoles sat and played at the cards and drank whisky as their custom is ; but Keawe walked the deck all night ; and all the next day, as they steamed under the lee of Maui or of Molokai, he was still pacing to and fro like a wild animal in a menagerie.

Towards evening they passed Diamond Head, and came to the pier of Honolulu. Keawe stepped out among the crowd and began to ask for Lopaka. It

* Whites.

seemed he had become the owner of a schooner—none better in the islands—and was gone upon an adventure as far as Pola-Pola or Kahiki; so there was no help to be looked for from Lopaka. Keawe called to mind a friend of his, a lawyer in the town (I must not tell his name), and inquired of him. They said he was grown suddenly rich, and had a fine new house upon Waikiki shore; and this put a thought in Keawe's head, and he called a hack and drove to the lawyer's house.

The house was all brand new, and the trees in the garden no greater than walking-sticks, and the lawyer, when he came, had the air of a man well pleased.

"What can I do to serve you?" said the lawyer.

"You are a friend of Lopaka's," replied Keawe, "and Lopaka purchased from me a certain piece of goods that I thought you might enable me to trace."

The lawyer's face became very dark. "I do not profess to misunderstand you, Mr. Keawe," said he, "though this is an ugly business to be stirring in. You may be sure I know nothing, but yet I have a guess, and if you would apply in a certain quarter I think you might have news."

And he named the name of a man, which, again, I had better not repeat. So it was for days, and Keawe went from one to another, finding everywhere new clothes and carriages, and fine new houses, and men everywhere in great contentment, although, to be sure, when he hinted at his business their faces would cloud over.

"No doubt I am upon the track," thought Keawe. "These new clothes and carriages are all the gifts of the little imp, and these glad faces are the faces of men who have taken their profit and got rid of the accursed thing in safety. When I see pale cheeks and hear sighing, I shall know that I am near the bottle."

So it befell at last he was recommended to a Haole

in Beritania Street. When he came to the door, about the hour of the evening meal, there were the usual marks of the new house, and the young garden, and the electric light shining in the windows ; but when the owner came, a shock of hope and fear ran through Keawe ; for here was a young man, white as a corpse, and black about the eyes, the hair shedding from his head, and such a look in his countenance as a man may have when he is waiting for the gallows.

"Here it is, to be sure," thought Keawe, and so with this man he noways veiled his errand. "I am come to buy the bottle," said he.

At the word, the young Haole of Beritania Street reeled against the wall.

"The bottle ! " he gasped. "To buy the bottle ! " Then he seemed to choke, and seizing Keawe by the arm, carried him into a room and poured out wine in two glasses.

"Here is my respects," said Keawe, who had been much about with Haoles in his time. "Yes," he added, "I am come to buy the bottle. What is the price by now ? "

At that word the young man let his glass slip through his fingers, and looked upon Keawe like a ghost.

"The price," says he ; "the price ! You do not know the price ? "

"It is for that I am asking you," returned Keawe. "But why are you so much concerned ? Is there anything wrong about the price ? "

"It has dropped a great deal in value since your time, Mr. Keawe," said the young man, stammering.

"Well, well, I shall have the less to pay for it," says Keawe. "How much did it cost you ? "

The young man was as white as a sheet. "Two cents," said he.

"What !" cried Keawe, "two cents ? Why, then,

you can only sell it for one. And he who buys it——” The words died upon Keawe’s tongue ; he who bought it could never sell it again, the bottle and the bottle imp must abide with him until he died, and when he died must carry him to the red end of hell.

The young man of Beritania Street fell upon his knees. “ For God’s sake, buy it ! ” he cried. “ You can have all my fortune in the bargain. I was mad when I bought it at that price. I had embezzled money at my store ; I was lost else ; I must have gone to jail.”

“ Poor creature,” said Keawe, “ you would risk your soul upon so desperate an adventure, and to avoid the proper punishment of your own disgrace ; and you think I could hesitate with love in front of me. Give me the bottle, and the change which I make sure you have all ready. Here is a five-cent piece.”

It was as Keawe supposed ; the young man had the change ready in a drawer ; the bottle changed hands, and Keawe’s fingers were no sooner clasped upon the stalk than he had breathed his wish to be a clean man. And sure enough, when he got home to his room, and stripped himself before a glass, his flesh was whole like an infant’s. And here was the strange thing : he had no sooner seen this miracle than his mind was changed within him, and he cared naught for the Chinese Evil, and little enough for Kokua ; and had but the one thought, that here he was bound to the bottle imp for time and for eternity, and had no better hope but to be a cinder for ever in the flames of hell. Away ahead of him he saw them blaze with his mind’s eye, and his soul shrank, and darkness fell upon the light.

When Keawe came to himself a little, he was aware it was the night when the band played at the hotel. Thither he went, because he feared to be alone ; and there, among happy faces, walked to and fro, and

heard the tunes go up and down, and saw Berger beat the measure, and all the while he heard the flames crackle and saw the red fire burning in the bottomless pit. Of a sudden the band played *Hiki-ao-ao*; that was a song that he had sung with Kokua, and at the strain courage returned to him.

"It is done now," he thought, "and once more let me take the good along with the evil."

So it befell that he returned to Hawaii by the first steamer, and as soon as it could be managed he was wedded to Kokua, and carried her up the mountain side to the Bright House.

Now it was so with these two, that when they were together Keawe's heart was stilled; but as soon as he was alone he fell into a brooding horror, and heard the flames crackle, and saw the red fire burn in the bottomless pit. The girl, indeed, had come to him wholly; her heart leaped in her side at sight of him, her hand clung to his; and she was so fashioned, from the hair upon her head to the nails upon her toes, that none could see her without joy. She was pleasant in her nature. She had the good word always. Full of song she was, and went to and fro in the Bright House, the brightest thing in its three stories, carolling like the birds. And Keawe beheld and heard her with delight, and then must shrink upon one side, and weep and groan to think upon the price that he had paid for her; and then he must dry his eyes, and wash his face, and go and sit with her on the broad balconies, joining in her songs, and, with a sick spirit, answering her smiles.

There came a day when her feet began to be heavy and her songs more rare; and now it was not Keawe only that would weep apart, but each would sunder from the other and sit in opposite balconies with the whole width of the Bright House betwixt. Keawe was so sunk in his despair, he scarce observed the change, and was only glad he had more hours to sit

alone and brood upon his destiny, and was not so frequently condemned to pull a smiling face on a sick heart. But one day, coming softly through the house, he heard the sound of a child sobbing, and there was Kokua rolling her face upon the balcony floor, and weeping like the lost.

" You do well to weep in this house, Kokua," he said. " And yet I would give the head off my body that you (at least) might have been happy."

" Happy ! " she cried. " Keawe, when you lived alone in your Bright House you were the word of the island for a happy man ; laughter and song were in your mouth, and your face was as bright as the sunrise. Then you wedded poor Kokua ; and the good God knows what is amiss in her—but from that day you have not smiled. Oh ! " she cried, " what ails me ? I thought I was pretty, and I knew I loved him. What ails me, that I throw this cloud upon my husband ? "

" Poor Kokua," said Keawe. He sat down by her side, and sought to take her hand ; but that she plucked away. " Poor Kokua," he said again. " My poor child—my pretty. And I had thought all this while to spare you ! Well, you shall know all. Then, at least, you will pity poor Keawe ; then you will understand how much he loved you in the past—that he dared hell for your possession—and how much he loves you still (the poor condemned one), that he can yet call up a smile when he beholds you."

With that he told her all, even from the beginning.

" You have done this for me ? " she cried. " Ah, well, then what do I care ! " and she clasped and wept upon him.

" Ah, child ! " said Keawe, " and yet, when I consider of the fire of hell, I care a good deal ! "

" Never tell me," said she, " no man can be lost because he loved Kokua, and no other fault. I tell you, Keawe, I shall save you with these hands, or

perish in your company. What ! you loved me and gave your soul, and you think I will not die to save you in return ? ”

“ Ah, my dear, you might die a hundred times : and what difference would that make ? ” he cried, “ except to leave me lonely till the time comes for my damnation ? ”

“ You know nothing,” said she. “ I was educated in a school in Honolulu ; I am no common girl. And I tell you I shall save my lover. What is this you say about a cent ? But all the world is not American. In England they have a piece they call a farthing, which is about half a cent. Ah ! sorrow ! ” she cried, “ that makes it scarcely better, for the buyer must be lost, and we shall find none so brave as my Keawe ! But then, there is France ; they have a small coin there which they call a centime, and these go five to the cent, or thereabout. We could not do better. Come, Keawe, let us go to the French islands ; let us go to Tahiti, as fast as ships can bear us. There we have four centimes, three centimes, two centimes, one centime ; four possible sales to come and go on ; and two of us to push the bargain. Come, my Keawe ! kiss me, and banish care. Kokua will defend you.”

“ Gift of God ! ” he cried. “ I cannot think that God will punish me for desiring aught so good. Be it as you will, then, take me where you please : I put my life and my salvation in your hands.”

Early the next day Kokua went about her preparations. She took Keawe’s chest that he went with sailoring ; and first she put the bottle in a corner, and then packed it with the richest of their clothes and the bravest of the knick-knacks in the house. “ For,” said she, “ we must seem to be rich folks, or who would believe in the bottle ? ” All the time of her preparation she was as gay as a bird ; only when she looked upon Keawe the tears would spring in her eye, and

she must run and kiss him. As for Keawe, a weight was off his soul ; now that he had his secret shared, and some hope in front of him, he seemed like a new man ; his feet went lightly on the earth, and his breath was good to him again. Yet was terror still at his elbow ; and ever and again, as the wind blows out a taper, hope died in him, and he saw the flames toss and the red fire burn in hell.

It was given out in the country they were gone pleasureing in the States, which was thought a strange thing, and yet not so strange as the truth, if any could have guessed it. So they went to Honolulu in the *Hall*, and thence in the *Umatilla* to San Francisco with a crowd of Haoles, and at San Francisco took their passage by the mail brigantine, the *Tropic Bird*, for Papeete, the chief place of the French in the south islands. Thither they came, after a pleasant voyage, on a fair day of the Trade Wind, and saw the reef with the surf breaking and Motuiti with its palms, and the schooner riding withinside, and the white houses of the town low down along the shore among green trees, and overhead the mountains and the clouds of Tahiti, the wise island.

It was judged the most wise to hire a house, which they did accordingly, opposite the British Consul's, to make a great parade of money, and themselves conspicuous with carriages and horses. This it was very easy to do, so long as they had the bottle in their possession ; for Kokua was more bold than Keawe, and, whenever she had a mind, called on the imp for twenty or a hundred dollars. At this rate they soon grew to be remarked in the town ; and the strangers from Hawaii, their riding and their driving, the fine holokus, and the rich lace of Kokua, became the matter of much talk.

They got on well after the first with the Tahitia language, which is indeed like to the Hawaiian, with a change of certain letters ; and as soon as they had

any freedom of speech, began to push the bottle. You are to consider it was not an easy subject to introduce ; it was not easy to persuade people you are in earnest, when you offer to sell them for four centimes the spring of health and riches inexhaustible. It was necessary besides to explain the dangers of the bottle ; and either people disbelieved the whole thing and laughed, or they thought the more of the darker part, became overcast with gravity, and drew away from Keawe and Kokua, as from persons who had dealings with the devil. So far from gaining ground, these two began to find they were avoided in the town ; the children ran away from them screaming, a thing intolerable to Kokua ; Catholics crossed themselves as they went by ; and all persons began with one accord to disengage themselves from their advances.

Depression fell upon their spirits. They would sit at night in their new house, after a day's weariness, and not exchange one word, or the silence would be broken by Kokua bursting suddenly into sobs. Sometimes they would pray together ; sometimes they would have the bottle out upon the floor, and sit all evening watching how the shadow hovered in the midst. At such times they would be afraid to go to rest. It was long ere slumber came to them, and, if either dozed off, it would be to wake and find the other silently weeping in the dark, or, perhaps, to wake alone, the other having fled from the house and the neighbourhood of that bottle, to pace under the bananas in the little garden, or to wander on the beach by moonlight.

One night it was so when Kokua awoke. Keawe was gone. She felt in the bed and his place was cold. Then fear fell upon her, and she sat up in bed. A little moonshine filtered through the shutters. The room was bright, and she could spy the bottle on the floor. Outside it blew high, the great trees of the

avenue cried aloud, and the fallen leaves rattled in the veranda. In the midst of this Kokua was aware of another sound ; whether of a beast or of a man she could scarce tell, but it was as sad as death, and cut her to the soul. Softly she arose, set the door ajar, and looked forth into the moonlit yard. There, under the bananas, lay Keawe, his mouth in the dust, and as he lay he moaned.

It was Kokua's first thought to run forward and console him ; her second potently withheld her. Keawe had borne himself before his wife like a brave man ; it became her little in the hour of weakness to intrude upon his shame. With the thought she drew back into the house.

"Heaven," she thought, "how careless have I been—how weak ! It is he, not I, that stands in this eternal peril ; it was he, not I, that took the curse upon his soul. It is for my sake, and for the love of a creature of so little worth and such poor help, that he now beholds so close to him the flames of hell—ay, and smells the smoke of it, lying without there in the wind and moonlight. Am I so dull of spirit that never till now I have surmised my duty, or have I seen it before and turned aside ? But now, at least, I take up my soul in both the hands of my affection ; now I say farewell to the white steps of heaven and the waiting faces of my friends. A love for a love, and let mine be equalled with Keawe's ! A soul for a soul, and be it mine to perish ! "

She was a deft woman with her hands, and was soon apparelled. She took in her hands the change—the precious centimes they kept ever at their side ; for this coin is little used, and they had made provision at a government office. When she was forth in the avenue clouds came on the wind, and the moon was blackened. The town slept, and she knew not whither to turn till she heard one coughing in the shadow of the trees.

"Old man," said Kokua, "what do you here abroad in the cold night?"

The old man could scarce express himself for coughing, but she made out that he was old and poor, and a stranger in the island.

"Will you do me a service?" said Kokua. "As one stranger to another, and as an old man to a young woman, will you help a daughter of Hawaii?"

"Ah," said the old man. "So you are the witch from the Eight Islands, and even my old soul you seek to entangle. But I have heard of you, and defy your wickedness."

"Sit down here," said Kokua, "and let me tell you a tale." And she told him the story of Keawe from the beginning to the end.

"And now," said she, "I am his wife, whom he bought with his soul's welfare. And what should I do? If I went to him myself and offered to buy it, he will refuse. But if you go, he will sell it eagerly; I will await you here; you will buy it for four centimes, and I will buy it again for three. And the Lord strengthen a poor girl!"

"If you meant falsely," said the old man, "I think God would strike you dead."

"He would!" cried Kokua. "Be sure He would. I could not be so treacherous; God would not suffer it."

"Give me the four centimes and await me here," said the old man.

Now, when Kokua stood alone in the street, her spirit died. The wind roared in the trees, and it seemed to her the rushing of the flames of hell; the shadows towered in the light of the street lamp, and they seemed to her the snatching hands of evil ones. If she had had the strength, she must have run away, and if she had had the breath, she must have screamed aloud; but, in truth, she could do neither, and stood and trembled in the avenue, like an affrighted child.

Then she saw the old man returning, and he had the bottle in his hand.

"I have done your bidding," said he. "I left your husband weeping like a child; to-night he will sleep easy." And he held the bottle forth.

"Before you give it me," Kokua panted, "take the good with the evil—ask to be delivered from your cough."

"I am an old man," replied the other, "and too near the gate of the grave to take a favour from the devil. But what is this? Why do you not take the bottle? Do you hesitate?"

"Not hesitate!" cried Kokua. "I am only weak. Give me a moment. It is my hand resists, my flesh shrinks back from the accursed thing. One moment only!"

The old man looked upon Kokua kindly. "Poor child!" said he, "you fear: your soul misgives you. Well, let me keep it. I am old, and can never more be happy in this world, and as for the next——"

"Give it me!" gasped Kokua. "There is your money. Do you think I am so base as that? Give me the bottle."

"God bless you, child," said the old man.

Kokua concealed the bottle under her holoku, said farewell to the old man, and walked off along the avenue, she cared not whither. For all roads were now the same to her, and led equally to hell. Sometimes she walked, and sometimes ran; sometimes she screamed out loud in the night, and sometimes lay by the wayside in the dust and wept. All that she had heard of hell came back to her; she saw the flames blaze, and she smelled the smoke, and her flesh withered on the coals.

Near day she came to her mind again, and returned to the house. It was even as the old man said—Keawe slumbered like a child. Kokua stood and gazed upon his face.

"Now, my husband," said she, "it is your turn to sleep. When you wake it will be your turn to sing and laugh. But for poor Kokua, alas! that meant no evil—for poor Kokua no more sleep, no more singing, no more delight, whether in earth or heaven."

With that she lay down in the bed by his side, and her misery was so extreme that she fell in a deep slumber instantly.

Late in the morning her husband woke her and gave her the good news. It seemed he was silly with delight, for he paid no heed to her distress, ill though she dissembled it. The words stuck in her mouth, it mattered not; Keawe did the speaking. She ate not a bite, but who was to observe it? For Keawe cleared the dish. Kokua saw and heard him, like some strange thing in a dream; there were times when she forgot or doubted, and put her hands to her brow; to know herself doomed and hear her husband's babble, seemed so monstrous.

All the while Keawe was eating and talking, and planning the time of their return, and thanking her for saving him and fondling her, and calling her the true helper after all. He laughed at the old man that was fool enough to buy that bottle.

"A worthy old man he seemed," Keawe said. "But no one can judge by appearances. For why did the old reprobate require the bottle?"

"My husband," said Kokua humbly, "his purpose may have been good."

Keawe laughed like an angry man.

"Fiddle-de-dee!" cried Keawe. "An old rogue, I tell you; and an old ass to boot. For the bottle was hard enough to sell at four centimes; and at three it will be quite impossible. The margin is not broad enough, the thing begins to smell of scorching—brrr!" said he, and shuddered. "It is true I bought it myself at a cent, when I knew not there were smaller coins. I was a fool for my pains; there

will never be found another, and whoever has that bottle now will carry it to the pit."

"O my husband!" said Kokua. "Is it not a terrible thing to save oneself by the eternal ruin of another? It seems to me I could not laugh. I would be humbled. I would be filled with melancholy. I would pray for the poor holder."

Then Keawe, because he felt the truth of what she said, grew the more angry. "Heigty-teigthy!" cried he. "You may be filled with melancholy if you please. It is not the mind of a good wife. If you thought at all of me, you would sit shamed."

Thereupon he went out, and Kokua was alone.

What chance had she to sell that bottle at two centimes? None, she perceived. And if she had any, here was her husband hurrying her away to a country where there was nothing lower than a cent. And here—on the morrow of her sacrifice—was her husband leaving her and blaming her.

She would not even try to profit by what time she had, but sat in the house, and now had the bottle out and viewed it with unutterable fear, and now, with loathing, hid it out of sight.

By-and-by Keawe came back, and would have her take a drive.

"My husband, I am ill," she said. "I am out of heart. Excuse me, I can take no pleasure."

Then was Keawe more wroth than ever. With her, because he thought she was brooding over the case of the old man; and with himself, because he thought she was right and was ashamed to be so happy.

"This is your truth," cried he, "and this your affection! Your husband is just saved from eternal ruin, which he encountered for the love of you—and you can take no pleasure! Kokua, you have a disloyal heart."

He went forth again furious, and wandered in the town all day. He met friends, and drank with

them ; they hired a carriage and drove into the country, and there drank again. All the time Keawe was ill at ease, because he was taking this pastime while his wife was sad, and because he knew in his heart that she was more right than he ; and the knowledge made him drink the deeper.

Now there was an old brutal Haole drinking with him, one that had been a boatswain of a whaler—a runaway, a digger in gold mines, a convict in prisons. He had a low mind and a foul mouth ; he loved to drink and to see others drunken ; and he pressed the glass upon Keawe. Soon there was no more money in the company.

"Here, you !" says the boatswain, "you are rich, you have been always saying. You have a bottle or some foolishness."

"Yes," says Keawe, "I am rich ; I will go back and get some money from my wife, who keeps it."

"That's a bad idea, mate," said the boatswain. "Never you trust a petticoat with dollars. They're all as false as water ; you keep an eye on her."

Now this word struck in Keawe's mind ; for he was muddled with what he had been drinking.

"I should not wonder but she was false, indeed," thought he. "Why else should she be so cast down at my release ? But I will show her I am not the man to be fooled. I will catch her in the act."

Accordingly, when they were back in town, Keawe bade the boatswain wait for him at the corner, by the old calaboose, and went forward up the avenue alone to the door of his house. The night had come again ; there was a light within, but never a sound ; and Keawe crept about the corner, opened the back door softly, and looked in.

There was Kokua on the floor, the lamp at her side ; before her was a milk-white bottle, with a round belly and a long neck ; and as she viewed it, Kokua wrung her hands.

A long time Keawe stood and looked in the doorway. At first he was struck stupid ; and then fear fell upon him that the bargain had been made amiss, and the bottle had come back to him as it came at San Francisco ; and at that his knees were loosened, and the fumes of the wine departed from his head like mists off a river in the morning. And then he had another thought ; and it was a strange one, that made his cheeks to burn.

"I must make sure of this," thought he.

So he closed the door, and went softly round the corner again, and then came noisily in, as though he were but now returned. And, lo ! by the time he opened the front door no bottle was to be seen ; and Kokua sat in a chair and started up like one awakened out of sleep.

"I have been drinking all day and making merry," said Keawe. "I have been with good companions, and now I only came back for money, and return to drink and carouse with them again."

Both his face and voice were as stern as judgment, but Kokua was too troubled to observe.

"You do well to use your own, my husband," said she, and her words trembled.

"Oh, I do well in all things," said Keawe, and he went straight to the chest and took out money. But he looked besides in the corner where they kept the bottle, and there was the bottle there.

At that the chest heaved upon the floor like a seabillow, and the house spun about him like a wreath of smoke, for he saw she was lost now, and there was no escape. "It is what I feared," he thought. "It is she who has bought it."

And then he came to himself a little and rose up ; but the sweat streamed on his face as thick as the rain and as cold as the well-water.

"Kokua," said he, "I said to you to-day what ill became me. Now I return to house with my jolly

companions," and at that he laughed a little quietly. "I will take more pleasure in the cup if you forgive me."

She clasped his knees in a moment, she kissed his knees with flowing tears.

"Oh," she cried, "I ask but a kind word!"

"Let us never one think hardly of the other," said Keawe, and was gone out of the house.

Now, the money that Keawe had taken was only some of that store of centime pieces they had laid in at their arrival. It was very sure he had no mind to be drinking. His wife had given her soul for him, now he must give his for hers; no other thought was in the world with him.

At the corner, by the old calaboose, there was the boatswain waiting.

"My wife has the bottle," said Keawe, "and, unless you help me to recover it, there can be no more money and no more liquor to-night."

"You do not mean to say you are serious about that bottle?" cried the boatswain.

"There is the lamp," said Keawe. "Do I look as if I was jesting?"

"That is so," said the boatswain. "You look as serious as a ghost."

"Well, then," said Keawe, "here are two centimes; you just go to my wife in the house, and offer her these for the bottle, which (if I am not much mistaken) she will give you instantly. Bring it to me here, and I will buy it back from you for one; for that is the law with this bottle, that it still must be sold for a less sum. But whatever you do, never breathe a word to her that you have come from me."

"Mate, I wonder are you making a fool of me?" asked the boatswain.

"It will do you no harm if I am," returned Keawe.

"That is so, mate," said the boatswain.

"And if you doubt me," added Keawe, "you can

try. As soon as you are clear of the house, wish to have your pocket full of money, or a bottle of the best rum, or what you please, and you will see the virtue of the thing."

"Very well, Kanaka," says the boatswain. "I will try; but if you are having your fun out of me, I will take my fun out of you with a belaying-pin."

So the whaler-man went off up the avenue; and Keawe stood and waited. It was near the same spot where Kokua had waited the night before; but Keawe was more resolved, and never faltered in his purpose; only his soul was bitter with despair.

It seemed a long time he had to wait before he heard a voice singing in the darkness of the avenue. He knew the voice to be the boatswain's; but it was strange how drunken it appeared upon a sudden.

Next the man himself came stumbling into the light of the lamp. He had the devil's bottle buttoned in his coat; another bottle was in his hand; and even as he came in view he raised it to his mouth and drank.

"You have it," said Keawe. "I see that."

"Hands off!" cried the boatswain, jumping back. "Take a step near me, and I'll smash your mouth. You thought you could make a catspaw of me, did you?"

"What do you mean?" cried Keawe.

"Mean?" cried the boatswain. "This is a pretty good bottle, this is; that's what I mean. How I got it for two centimes I can't make out; but I am sure you shan't have it for one."

"You mean you won't sell?" gasped Keawe.

"No, sir," cried the boatswain. "But I'll give you a drink of the rum, if you like."

"I tell you," said Keawe, "the man who has that bottle goes to hell."

"I reckon I'm going anyway," returned the sailor; "and this bottle's the best thing to go with I've

struck yet. No, sir ! " he cried again, " this is my bottle now, and you can go and fish for another."

" Can this be true ? " Keawe cried. " For your own sake, I beseech you, sell it me ! "

" I don't value any of your talk," replied the boatswain. " You thought I was a flat, now you see I'm not ; and there's an end. If you won't have a swallow of the rum, I'll have one myself. Here's your health, and good-night to you ! "

So off he went down the avenue towards town, and there goes the bottle out of the story.

But Keawe ran to Kokua light as the wind ; and great was their joy that night ; and great, since then, has been the peace of all their days in the Bright House.

THE TWO HOUSEHOLDERS

*Extract from the Memoirs of Gabriel Foot,
Highwayman*

("Q")

(A. T. QUILLER-COUCH)

I WILL say this—speaking as accurately as a man may, so long afterwards—that when first I spied the house it put no desire in me but just to give thanks.

For conceive my case. It was near midnight, and ever since dusk I had been tramping the naked moors, in the teeth of as vicious a nor'-wester as ever drenched a man to the skin, and then blew the cold home to his marrow. My clothes were sodden; my coat-tails flapped with a noise like pistol-shots; my boots squeaked as I went. Overhead, the October moon was in her last quarter, and might have been a slice of finger-nail for all the light she afforded. Two-thirds of the time the wrack blotted her out altogether; and I, with my stick clipped tight under my armpit, eyes puckered up, and head bent aslant, had to keep my wits alive to distinguish the road from the black heath to right and left. For three hours I had met neither man nor man's dwelling, and (for all I knew) was desperately lost. Indeed, at the cross-roads, two miles back, there had been nothing for me but to choose the way that kept the wind on my face, and it gnawed me like a dog.

Mainly to allay the stinging of my eyes, I pulled up at last, turned right-about-face, leant back against the

blast with a hand on my hat, and surveyed the blackness behind. It was at this instant that, far away to the left, a point of light caught my notice, faint but steady ; and at once I felt sure it burnt in the window of a house. "The house," thought I, "is a good mile off, beside the other road, and the light must have been an inch over my hat-brim for the last half-hour." This reflection—that on so wide a moor I had come near missing the information I wanted (and perhaps a supper) by one inch—sent a strong thrill down my back.

I cut straight across the heather towards the light, risking quags and pitfalls. Nay, so heartening was the chance to hear a fellow-creature's voice, that I broke into a run, skipping over the stunted gorse that cropped up here and there, and dreading every moment to see the light quenched. "Suppose it burns in an upper window, and the family is going to bed, as would be likely at this hour——" The apprehension kept my eyes fixed on the bright spot, to the frequent scandal of my legs, that within five minutes were stuck full of gorse prickles.

But the light did not go out, and soon a flicker of moonlight gave me a glimpse of the house's outline. It proved to be a deal more imposing than I looked for—the outline, in fact, of a tall, square barrack, with a cluster of chimneys at either end, like ears, and a high wall, topped by the roofs of some out-buildings, concealing the lower windows. There was no gate in this wall, and presently I guessed the reason. I was approaching the place from behind, and the light came from a back window on the first floor.

The faintness of the light also was explained by this time. It shone behind a drab-coloured blind, and in shape resembled the stem of a wineglass, broadening out at the foot ; an effect produced by the half-drawn curtains within. I came to a halt, waiting for the

next ray of moonlight. At the same moment a rush of wind swept over the chimney-stacks, and on the wind there seemed to ride a human sigh.

On this last point I may err. The gust had passed some seconds before I caught myself detecting this peculiar note, and trying to disengage it from the natural chords of the storm. From the next gust it was absent ; and then, to my dismay, the light faded from the window.

I was half-minded to call out when it appeared again, this time in two windows—those next on the right to that where it had shone before. Almost at once it increased in brilliance, as if the person who carried it from the smaller room to the larger were lighting more candles ; and now the illumination was strong enough to make fine gold threads of the rain that fell within its radiance, and fling two shafts of warm yellow over the coping of the back wall. During the minute or more that I stood watching, no shadow fell on either blind.

Between me and the wall ran a ditch, into which the ground at my feet broke sharply away. Setting my back to the storm again, I followed the lip of this ditch around the wall's angle. Here it shallowed, and here, too, was shelter ; but not wishing to mistake a bed of nettles or any such pitfall for solid earth, I kept pretty wide as I went on. The house was dark on this side, and the wall, as before, had no opening. Close beside the next angle there grew a mass of thick gorse bushes, and pushing through these I found myself suddenly on a sound highroad, with the wind tearing at me as furiously as ever.

But here was the front ; and I now perceived that the surrounding wall advanced some way before the house, so as to form a narrow courtlage. So much of it, too, as faced the road had been whitewashed, which made it an easy matter to find the gate. But as I laid hand on its latch I had a surprise.

A line of paving-stones led from the gate to a heavy porch ; and along the wet surface of these there fell a streak of light from the front door, which stood ajar.

That a door should remain six inches open on such a night was astonishing enough, until I entered the court and found it as still as a room, owing to the high wall. But looking up and assuring myself that all the rest of the façade was black as ink, I wondered at the carelessness of the inmates.

It was here that my professional instinct received the first jog. Abating the sound of my feet on the paving-stones, I went up to the door and pushed it softly. It opened without noise.

I stepped into a fair-sized hall of modern build, paved with red tiles and lit with a small hanging-lamp. To right and left were doors leading to the ground-floor rooms. Along the wall by my shoulder ran a line of pegs, on which hung half a dozen hats and greatcoats, every one of clerical shape ; and full in front of me a broad staircase ran up, with a staring Brussels carpet, the colours and pattern of which I can recall as well as I can to-day's breakfast. Under this staircase was set a stand full of walking-sticks, and a table littered with gloves, brushes, a hand-bell, a riding-crop, one or two dog-whistles, and a bedroom candle, with tinder-box beside it. This, with one notable exception, was all the furniture.

The exception—which turned me cold—was the form of a yellow mastiff dog, curled on a mat beneath the table. The arch of his back was towards me, and one forepaw lay over his nose in a natural posture of sleep. I leant back on the wainscoting with my eyes tightly fixed on him, and my thoughts sneaking back, with something of regret, to the storm I had come through.

But a man's habits are not easily denied. At the end of three minutes the dog had not moved, and I was down on the door-mat unlacing my soaked boots.

Slipping them off, and taking them in my left hand, I stood up, and tried a step towards the stairs, with eyes alert for any movement of the mastiff; but he never stirred. I was glad enough, however, on reaching the stairs, to find them newly built, and the carpet thick. Up I went, with a glance at every step for the table which now hid the brute's form from me, and never a creak did I wake out of that staircase till I was almost at the first landing, when my toe caught a loose stair-rod, and rattled it in a way that stopped my heart for a moment, and then set it going in double-quick time.

I stood still with a hand on the rail. My eyes were now on a level with the floor of the landing, out of which branched two passages—one turning sharply to my right, the other straight in front, so that I was gazing down the length of it. Almost at the end, a parallelogram of light fell across it from an open door.

A man who has once felt it knows there is only one kind of silence that can fitly be called "dead." This is only to be found in a great house at midnight. I declare that for a few seconds after I rattled the stair-rod you might have cut the silence with a knife. If the house held a clock, it ticked inaudibly.

Upon this silence, at the end of a minute, broke a light sound—the *tink-tink* of a decanter on the rim of a wineglass. It came from the room where the light was.

Now perhaps it was that the very thought of liquor put warmth into my cold bones. It is certain that all of a sudden I straightened my back, took the remaining stairs at two strides, and walked down the passage as bold as brass, without caring a jot for the noise I made.

In the doorway I halted. The room was long, lined for the most part with books bound in what they call "divinity calf," and littered with papers like a barrister's table on assize day. A leatherne elbow-

chair faced the fireplace, where a few coals burned sulkily, and beside it, on the corner of a writing-table, were set an unlit candle and a pile of manuscripts. At the opposite end of the room a curtained door led (as I guessed) to the chamber that I had first seen illuminated. All this I took in with the tail of my eye, while staring straight in front, where, in the middle of a great square of carpet, between me and the windows, stood a table with a red cloth upon it. On this cloth were a couple of wax candles lit, in silver stands, a tray, and a decanter three-parts full of brandy. And between me and the table stood a man.

He stood sideways, leaning a little back, as if to keep his shadow off the threshold, and looked at me over his left shoulder—a bald, grave man, slightly under the common height, with a long clerical coat of preposterous fit hanging loosely from his shoulders, a white cravat, black breeches, and black stockings. His feet were loosely thrust into carpet slippers. I judged his age at fifty, or thereabouts ; but his face rested in the shadow, and I could only note a pair of eyes, very small and alert, twinkling above a large expanse of cheek.

He was lifting a wine-glass from the table at the moment when I appeared, and it trembled now in his right hand. I heard a spilt drop or two fall on the carpet. This was all the evidence he showed of discomposure.

Setting the glass back, he felt in his breast-pocket for a handkerchief, failed to find one, and rubbed his hands together to get the liquor off his fingers.

" You startled me," he said, in a matter-of-fact tone, turning his eyes upon me, as he lifted his glass again and emptied it. " How did you find your way in ? "

" By the front door," said I, wondering at his unconcern.

He nodded his head slowly.

"Ah! yes; I forgot to lock it. You came to steal, I suppose?"

"I came because I'd lost my way. I've been travelling this God-forsaken moor since dusk—"

"With your boots in your hand," he put in quietly.

"I took them off out of respect to the yellow dog you keep."

"He lies in a very natural attitude—eh?"

"You don't tell me he was *stuffed*?"

The old man's eyes beamed a contemptuous pity.

"You are indifferent sharp, my dear sir, for a housebreaker. Come in. Set down those convicting boots, and don't drip pools of water in the doorway. If I must entertain a burglar, I prefer him tidy."

He walked to the fire, picked up a poker, and knocked the coals into a blaze. This done, he turned round on me with the poker still in his hand. The serenest gravity sat on his large, pale features.

"Why have I done this?" he asked.

"I suppose to get possession of the poker."

"Quite right. May I inquire your next move?"

"Why?" said I, feeling in my tail-pocket, "I carry a pistol."

"Which I suppose to be damp?"

"By no means. I carry it, as you see, in an oil-cloth case."

He stooped, and laid the poker carefully in the fender.

"That is a stronger card than I possess. I might urge that by pulling the trigger you would certainly alarm the house and the neighbourhood, and put a halter round your neck. But it strikes me as safer to assume you capable of using a pistol with effect at three paces. With what might happen subsequently I will not pretend to be concerned. The fate of your neck"—he waved a hand—"well, I have known you

for just five minutes, and feel but a moderate interest in your neck. As for the inmates of this house, it will refresh you to hear that there are none. I have lived here two years with a butler and female cook, both of whom I dismissed yesterday at a minute's notice, for conduct which I will not shock your ears by explicitly naming. Suffice it to say, I carried them off yesterday to my parish church, two miles away, married them, and dismissed them in the vestry without characters. I wish you had known that butler—but excuse me; with the information I have supplied, you ought to find no difficulty in fixing the price you will take to clear out of my house instanter."

"Sir," I answered, "I have held a pistol at one or two heads in my time, but never at one stuffed with nobler indiscretion. Your chivalry does not, indeed, disarm me, but prompts me to desire more of your acquaintance. I have found a gentleman, and must sup with him before I make terms."

This address seemed to please him. He shuffled across the room to a sideboard, and produced a plate of biscuits, another of dried figs, a glass, and two decanters.

"Sherry and Madeira," he said. "There is also a cold pie in the larder, if you care for it."

"A biscuit will serve," I replied. "To tell the truth, I'm more for the bucket than the manger, as the grooms say: and the brandy you were tasting just now is more to my mind than wine."

"There is no water handy."

"I have soaked in enough to-night to last me with this bottle."

I pulled over a chair, laid my pistol on the table, and held out the glass for him to fill. Having done so, he helped himself to a glass and a chair, and sat down facing me.

"I was speaking, just now, of my late butler," he

began, with a sip at his brandy. " Does it strike you that, when confronted with moral delinquency, I am apt to let my indignation get the better of me ? "

" Not at all," I answered heartily, refilling my glass.

It appeared that another reply would have pleased him better.

" H'm. I was hoping that, perhaps, I had visited his offence too strongly. As a clergyman, you see, I was bound to be severe ; but upon my word, sir, since Parkinson left I have felt like a man who has lost a limb."

He drummed with his fingers on the cloth for a few moments, and went on—

" One has a natural disposition to forgive butlers —Pharaoh, for instance, felt it. There hovers around butlers an atmosphere in which common ethics lose their pertinence. But mine was a rare bird—a black swan among butlers ! He was more than a butler : he was a quick and brightly gifted man. Of the accuracy of his taste, and the unusual scope of his endeavour, you will be able to form some opinion when I assure you he modelled himself upon *me*."

I bowed over my brandy.

" I am a scholar : yet I employed him to read aloud to me, and derived pleasure from his intonation. I talk with refinement : yet he learned to answer me in language as precise as my own. My cast-off garments fitted him not more irreproachably than did my amenities of manner. Divest him of his tray, and you would find his mode of entering a room hardly distinguishable from my own—the same urbanity, the same alertness of carriage, the same superfine deference towards the weaker sex. All—all my idiosyncrasies I saw reflected in him ; and can you doubt that I was gratified ? He was my *alter ego*—which, by the way, makes it harder for me to pardon his behaviour with the cook."

"Look here," I broke in; "you want a new butler?"

"Oh, you really grasp that fact, do you?" he retorted.

"Why, then," said I, "let me cease to be your burglar and let me continue here as your butler."

He leant back, spreading out the fingers of each hand on the table's edge.

"Believe me," I went on, "you might do worse. I have been in my time a demy of Magdalen College, Oxford, and retain some Greek and Latin. I'll undertake to read the Fathers with an accent that shall not offend you. My taste in wine is none the worse for having been formed in other men's cellars. Moreover, you shall engage the ugliest cook in Christendom, so long as I'm your butler. I've taken a liking to you—that's flat—and I apply for the post."

"I give forty pounds a year," said he.

"And I'm cheap at that price."

He filled up his glass, looking up at me while he did so with the air of one digesting a problem. From first to last his face was grave as a judge's.

"We are too impulsive, I think," was his answer, after a minute's silence; "and your speech smacks of the amateur. You say, 'Let me cease to be your burglar and let me be your butler.' The aspiration is respectable; but a man might as well say, 'Let me cease to write sermons, let me paint pictures.' And truly, sir, you impress me as no expert even in your present trade."

"On the other hand," I argued, "consider the moderation of my demands; that alone should convince you of my desire to turn over a new leaf. I ask for a month's trial; if at the end of that time I don't suit, you shall say so, and I'll march from your door with nothing in my pocket but my month's wages. Be hanged, sir! but when I reflect on the amount you'll have to pay to get me to face to-night's storm

again, you seem to be getting off dirt cheap ! " cried I, slapping my palm on the table.

" Ah, if you had only known Parkinson ! " he exclaimed.

Now the third glass of clean spirit has always a deplorable effect on me. It turns me from bright to black, from levity to extreme sulkiness. I have done more wickedness over this third tumbler than in all the other states of comparative inebriety within my experience. So now I glowered at my companion and cursed.

" Look here, I don't want to hear any more of Parkinson, and I've a pretty clear notion of the game you're playing. You want to make me drunk, and you're ready to sit prattling there plying me till I drop under the table."

" Do me the favour to remember that you came, and are staying, on your own motion. As for the brandy, I would remind you that I suggested a milder drink. Try some Madeira."

He handed me the decanter as he spoke, and I poured out a glass.

" Madeira ! " said I, taking a gulp. " Ugh ! it's the commonest Marsala ! "

I had no sooner said the words than he rose up and stretched a hand gravely across to me.

" I hope you will shake it," he said ; " though, as a man who after three glasses of neat spirit can distinguish between Madeira and Marsala, you have every right to refuse me. Two minutes ago you offered to become my butler, and I demurred. I now beg you to repeat that offer. Say the word, and I employ you gladly : you shall even have the second decanter (which contains genuine Madeira) to take to bed with you."

We shook hands on our bargain, and catching up a candlestick, he led the way from the room.

Picking up my boots, I followed him along the

passage and down the silent staircase. In the hall he paused to stand on tiptoe, and turn up the lamp, which was burning low. As he did so, I found time to fling a glance at my old enemy, the mastiff. He lay as I had first seen him—a stuffed dog, if ever there was one. “Decidedly,” thought I, “my wits are to seek to-night;” and with the same, a sudden suspicion made me turn to my conductor, who had advanced to the left-hand door, and was waiting for me, with a hand on the knob.

“One moment!” I said: “this is all very pretty, but how am I to know you’re not sending me to bed while you fetch in all the countryside to lay me by the heels?”

“I’m afraid,” was his answer, “you must be content with my word, as a gentleman, that never, to-night or hereafter, will I breathe a syllable about the circumstances of your visit. However, if you choose, we will return upstairs.”

“No; I’ll trust you,” said I; and he opened the door.

It led into a broad passage paved with slate, upon which three or four rooms opened. He paused by the second and ushered me into a sleeping-chamber, which, though narrow, was comfortable enough—a vast improvement, at any rate, on the mumpers’ lodgings I had been used to for many months past.

“You can undress here,” he said. “The sheets are aired, and if you’ll wait a moment, I’ll fetch a nightshirt—one of my own.”

“Sir, you heap coals of fire on me.”

“Believe me that for ninety-nine of your qualities I do not care a tinker’s curse; but for your palate you are to be taken care of.”

He shuffled away, but came back in a couple of minutes with the nightshirt.

“Good-night,” he called to me, flinging it in at the door; and without giving me time to return the wish, went his way upstairs.

Now it might be supposed I was only too glad to toss off my clothes and climb into the bed I had so unexpectedly acquired a right to. But, as a matter of fact, I did nothing of the kind. Instead, I drew on my boots and sat on the bed's edge, blinking at my candle till it died down in its socket, and afterwards at the purple square of window as it slowly changed to grey with the coming of dawn. I was cold to the heart, and my teeth chattered with an ague. Certainly I never suspected my host's word ; but was even occupied in framing good resolutions and shaping out a reputable future, when I heard the front door gently pulled to, and a man's footsteps moving quietly to the gate.

The treachery knocked me in a heap for the moment. Then, leaping up and flinging my door wide, I stumbled through the uncertain light of the passage into the front hall.

There was a fan-shaped light over the door, and the place was very still and grey. A quick thought, or rather a sudden, prophetic guess at the truth, made me turn to the figure of the mastiff curled under the hall table.

I laid my hand on the scruff of his neck. He was quite limp, and my fingers sank into the flesh on either side of the vertebræ. Digging them deeper, I dragged him out into the middle of the hall and pulled the front door open to see the better.

His throat was gashed from ear to ear.

How many seconds passed after I dropped the senseless lump on the floor, and before I made another movement, it would puzzle me to say. Twice I stirred a foot as if to run out at the door. Then, changing my mind, I stepped over the mastiff, and ran up the staircase.

The passage at the top was now dark ; but groping down it, I found the study door open, as before, and passed in. A sick light stole through the blinds

—enough for me to distinguish the glasses and decanters on the table, and find my way to the curtain that hung before the inner room.

I pushed the curtain aside, paused for a moment, and listened to the violent beat of my heart; then felt for the door handle and turned it.

All I could see at first was that the chamber was small; next, that the light patch in a line with the window was the white coverlet of a bed; and next that somebody, or something, lay on the bed.

I listened again. There was no sound in the room; no heart beating but my own. I reached out a hand to pull up the blind, and drew it back again. I dared not.

The daylight grew minute by minute on the dull oblong of the blind, and minute by minute that horrible thing on the bed took something of distinctness.

The strain beat me at last. I fetched a loud yell to give myself courage, and, reaching for the cord, pulled up the blind as fast as it would go.

The face on the pillow was that of an old man—a face waxen and peaceful, with quiet lines about the mouth and eyes, and long lines of grey hair falling back from the temples. The body was turned a little on one side, and one hand lay outside the bed-clothes in a very natural manner. But there were two big dark stains on the pillow and coverlet.

Then I knew I was face to face with the real householder, and it flashed on me that I had been indiscreet in taking service as his butler, and that I knew the face his ex-butler wore.

And, being by this time awake to the responsibilities of the post, I quitted it three steps at a time, not once looking behind me. Outside the house the storm had died down, and white daylight was gleaming over the sodden moors. But my bones were cold, and I ran faster and faster.

THE SECRET OF THE HEATHER-ALE

(NEIL MUNRO)

DOWN Glenaora threescore and ten of Diarmaid's stout fellows took the road on a fine day. They were men from Carnus, with more of Clan Artair than Campbell in them ; but they wore Gilleanbuig Gruamach's tartan, and if they were not on Gilleanbuig Gruamach's errand, it makes little difference on our story. It was about the time Antrim and his dirty Irishers came scouring through our glens with flambœux, dirk and sword and other arms invasive, and the country was back at its old trade of fighting, with not a sheiling from end to end, except on the slopes of Shira Glen, where a clan kept free of battle and drank the finest of heather-ale that the world envied the secret of.

"Lift we and go, for the Cattle's before !" said Alasdair Piobaire on the chanter of a Dunvegan great-pipe—a neat tune that roared gallant and far from Carnus to Baracaldine ; so there they were, the pick of swank fellows on the road !

At the head of them was Niall Mor a' Chamais—the same gentleman namely in story for many an art and the slaughter of the strongest man in the world, as you'll find in the writings of my Lord Archie. "God ! look at us !" said he, when his lads came over the hill in the grey mouth of day. "Are not we the splendid men ? Fleas will there be this day in the hose of the Glenshira folk." And he sent his targe in the air in a

bravado, catching it by the prong in its navel, smart and clean, when it whirled back.

Hawks yelped as they passed ; far up on Tullich there was barking of eagles ; the brogues met the road as light as the stag-slot ; laughing, singing, roaring ; sword-heads and pikes dunting on wooden targets—and only once they looked back at their women high on the brae-face.

The nuts were thick on the roadside, hanging heavy from swinging branches, and some of the men pulled them off as they passed, stayed for more, straggled, and sang bits of rough songs they ken over many of on Lochowside to this day. So Niall Mor glunched at his corps from under his bonnet and showed his teeth.

"Gather in, gather in," said he ; "ye march like a drove of low-country cattle. Alasdair, put 'Baile Inneraora' on her !"

Alasdair changed his tune, and the good march of Clan Diarmaid went swinging down the glen.

The time passed ; the sun stood high and hot ; clucking from the fir-plantings came woodcock and cailzie ; the two rivers were crossed, and the Diarmuids slackened their thirst at the water of Altan Aluinn, whose birth is somewhere in the bogs beside tall Bhuidhe Ben.

Where the clans met was at the Foal's Gap, past Maam. A score of the MacKellars ran out in a line from the bushes, and stotted back from the solid weight of Diarmaid moving in a lump and close-shouldered in the style Niall Mor got from the Italian soldier. Some fell, hacked on the head by the heavy slash of the dry sword ; some gripped too late at the pikes that kittled them cruelly ; and one—Iver-of-the-Oars—tripped on a root of heather, and fell with his breast on the point of a Diarmaid's dirk.

To the hills went a fast summons, and soon at the mouth of the gap came twoscore of the MacKellars.

They took a new plan, and close together faced the green tartan, keeping it back at the point of steel, though the pick of Glenaora wore it, and the brogues slipped on the brae-face. It was fast cut and drive, quick flash of the dirk, with the palm up and the hand low to find the groin, and a long reach with the short black knife. The choked breath hissed at teeth and nose, the salt smell of new blood brought a shiver to birch-leaf and gall. But ever the green tartan had the best of it.

"Bas, bas, Dhiarmaid!" cried Calum Dubh, coming up on the back of his breaking twoscore with fresh lads from Elerigmor, bed-naked to the hide, and a new fury fell on the two clans tearing at it in the narrow hollow in between the rocky hills. So close they were, there was small room for the whirl of the basket-hilt, and "*Mind Tom-a-Phubaill and the shortened steel!*" cried Niall Mor, smashing a pretty man's face with a blow from the iron guard of his Ferrara sword. The halberts, snapped at the haft to make whistles, hammered on the target-hides like stones on a coffin, or rang on the bosses; the tartan ripped when the stuck one rolled on his side before the steel could be twisted out; below the foot the grass felt warm and greasy, and the reason was not ill to seek.

Once it looked like the last of Calum Dubh. He was facing Niall Mor, sword and targe, and Niall Mor changed the sword to the other hand, pulled the *sgian-dubh* from his garter, and with snapping teeth pushed like a lightning fork below MacKellar's target. An Elerigmor man ran in between; the little black knife sunk into his belly with a moist plunge, and the blood spouted on the deer-horn haft.

"Mallachd ort! I meant yon for a better man," cried Niall Mor; "but it's well as it is, for the secret's to the fore," and he stood up dour and tall against a new front of MacKellar's men.

Then the sky changed, and a thin smirr of warm

rains fell on the glen like smoke ; some black-cattle bellowed at the ford in a wonder at where their herds could be, and the herds—stuck, slashed, and cudgelled—lay stiffening on the torn grass between the gap and MacKellar's house. From end to end of the glen there was no man left but was at the fighting. The hook was tossed among the corn ; the man hot-foot behind the roe, turned when he had his knife at its throat, to go to war ; a lover left his lass among the heather ; and all, with tightened belts, were at the old game with Clan Diarmaid, while their women, far up on the sappy levels between the hill-tops and beside the moor-lochs, span at the wheel or carded wool, singing songs with light hearts and thinking no danger.

Back went MacKellar's men before Niall Mor and his sturdy lads from Carnus, the breeder of soldiers—back through the gap and down on the brae to the walls of Calum Dubh.

“*‘Illean, ‘illean !*” cried Calum ; “ lads, lads ! they have us, sure enough. Oh ! pigs and thieves ! squint mouths and sons of liars ! ”

The cry gathered up the strength of all that was left of his clan, Art and Uileam, the Maam lads, the brothers from Drimlea and two from over Stron hill, and they stood up together against the Carnus men—a gallant madness ! They died fast and hard, and soon but Calum and his two sons were left fencing, till a rush of Diarmais sent them through the door of the house and tossed among the peats.

“ Give in and your lives are your own,” said Niall Mor, wiping his sword on his shirt-sleeve, and with all that were left of his Diarmais behind his back.

To their feet stood the three MacKellars. Calum looked at the folk in front of him, and had mind of other ends to battles. “ To die in a house like a rat were no great credit,” said he, and he threw his sword on the floor, where the blades of Art and Uileam soon joined it.

With tied arms the father and his sons were taken outside, where the air was full of the scents of birch and gall new-washed. The glen, clearing fast of mist, lay green and sweet for mile and mile, and far at its mouth the fat Blaranbuie woods chuckled in the sun.

"I have you now," said Niall Mor. "Ye ken what we seek. It's the old ploy—the secret of the ale."

Calum laughed in his face, and the two sons said things that cut like knives.

"Man! I'm feared ye'll rue this," said Niall Mor, calm enough. "Ye may laugh, but—what would ye call a gentleman's death?"

"With the sword or the dagger in the hand, and a Diarmaid or two before me," cried Calum.

"Well, there might be worse ways of travelling yont—indeed there could ill be better; but if the secret of the ale is not to be ours for the asking, ye'll die a less well-bred death."

"Name it, man, name it," said Calum. "Might it be tow at the throat and a fir-branch."

"Troth," said Niall Mor, "and that were too gentle a travelling. The Scaurnoch's on our way, and the crows at the foot of it might relish a Glen Shira carcass."

Uileam whitened at the notion of so ugly an end, but Calum only said, "Die we must any way," and Art whistled a bit of a pipe-tune, grinding his heel on the moss.

Niall Mor made to strike the father on the face, but stayed his hand and ordered the three in-by, with a few of his corps to guard them. Up and down Glen Shira went the Diarmais, seeking the brewing-cave, giving hut and home to the flame, and making black hearths and low lintels for the women away in the sheilings. They buried their dead at Kilblaan, and, with no secret the better, set out for Scaurnoch with Calum and his sons.

The MacKellars were before, like a *spreidh* of stolen cattle, and the lot of the driven herd was theirs. They were laughed at and spat on, and dirk-hilts and *cromags* hammered on their shoulders, and through Blaranbuie wood they went to the bosky elbow of Dun Corrbhile and round to the Dun beyond.

Calum, for all his weariness, stepped like a man with a lifetime's plans before his mind ; Art looked about him in the fashion of one with an eye to woodcraft ; Uileam slouched with a heavy foot, white at the jaw and wild of eye.

The wood opened, the hunting-road bent about the hill-face to give a level that the eye might catch the country spread below. Loch Finne stretched far, from Ardno to French Foreland, a glassy field, specked with one sail off Creaggans. When the company came to a stand, Calum Dubh tossed his head to send the hair from his eyes, and looked at what lay below. The Scaurnoch broke at his feet, the grey rock-face falling to a depth so deep that weary mists still hung upon the sides, jagged here and there by the top of a fir-tree. The sun, behind the Dun, gave the last of her glory to the Cowal Hills ; Hell's Glen filled with wheeling mists ; Ben Ime, Ben Vane, and Ben Arthur crept together and held princely converse on the other side of the sea.

All in a daze of weariness and thinking the Diarmuids stood, and looked and listened, and the curlews were crying bitter on the shore.

" Oh, haste ye, lads, or it's not Carnus for us to-night," cried Niall Mor. " We have business before us, and long's the march to follow. The secret, black fellow ! "

Calum Dubh laughed, and spat in a bravado over the edge of the rock.

" Come, fool ; if we have not the word from you before the sun's off Sithean Sluaidhe, your sleep this night is yonder," and he pointed at the pit below.

Calum laughed the more. " If it was hell itself," said he, " I would not save my soul from it."

" Look, man, look ! the Sithean Sluaidhe's getting black, and any one of ye can save the three yet. I swear it on the cross of my knife."

Behind the brothers, one, John-Without-Asking, stood, with a gash on his face, eager to give them to the crows below.

A shiver came to Uileam's lips ; he looked at his father with a questioning face, and then stepped back a bit from the edge, making to speak to the tall man of Chamis.

Calum saw the meaning, and spoke fast and thick.

" Stop, stop," said he ; " it's a trifle of a secret, after all, and to save life ye can have it."

Art took but a little look at his father's face, then turned round on Shira Glen and looked on the hills where the hunting had many a time been sweet. " Maam no more," said he to himself ; " but here's death in the hero's style ! "

" I thought you would tell it," laughed Niall Mor. " There was never one of your clan but had a tight grip of his little life."

" Ay ! " said Calum Dubh ; " but it's *my* secret. I had it from one who made me swear on the holy steel to keep it ; but take me to Carnus, and I'll make you the heather-ale."

" So be't, and—"

" But there's this in it, I can look no clansmen nor kin in the face after telling it, so Art and Uileam must be out of the way first."

" Death, MacKellar ? "

" That same."

Uileam shook like a leaf, and Art laughed, with his face still to Shira, for he had guessed his father's mind.

" Faith ! " said Niall Mor, " and that's an easy thing enough," and he nodded to John-Without-Asking.

The man made stay nor tarry. He put a hand on

each son's back and pushed them over the edge to their death below. One cry came up to the listening Diarmaids, one cry and no more—the last gasp of a craven.

"Now we'll take you to Carnus, and you'll make us the ale, the fine ale, the cream of rich heather-ale," said Niall Mor, putting a knife to the thongs that tied MacKellar's arms to his side.

With a laugh and a fast leap Calum Dubh stood back on the edge of the rock again.

"Crook-mouths, fools, pigs' sons ! did ye think it ? " he cried. " Come with me and my sons and ye'll get ale, ay, and death's black wine, at the foot of Scaurnoch." He caught fast and firm at John-Without-Asking, and threw himself over the rock-face. They fell as the scart dives, straight to the dim sea of mist and pine-tip, and the Diarmaids threw themselves on their breasts to look over. There was nothing to see of life but the crows swinging on black feathers ; there was nothing to hear but the crows scolding.

Niall Mor put the bonnet on his head and said his first and last friendly thing of a foe.

"Yon," said he, "had the heart of a man ! "

THE GREEN GLEN

(JOHN BUCHAN)

I

I FIRST saw the Glen when I was eleven years old, a small boy consumed with a passion for trout. Adventuring on a rusty bicycle I had penetrated to remote dales, and made baskets in streams which no *Anglers' Guide* ever heard of. One day I had fished the sources of the Cauldshaw, and the sun being yet high, bethought me of the Fawn, which flowed on the other side of the narrow watershed. I shouldered my rod and tramped up the mossy spaces of the burn-head, till I waded deep in the bracken of the ridge. There on the summit the heather ended as if ruled by a gardener's line. I was looking into a narrow glen which ran from a round hope till a broad green hill baulked the view. From beginning to end there was no house, not even a sheepfold or a dyke. I remember my amazement at its indescribable greenness. There was the yellow-green of moss, the old velvet of mountain turf, the grey-green of bent on the hill-brow; but all was green, without tree or crag or heather bush to distract the eye. Through the middle of it ran the Fawn, a very fishable stream to my notion, and I ran down the brae with hope high in my heart.

But I never cast a fly in those waters. Long before I was down the hill the eeriness and the solitariness of the place weighed on my mind. There was no man here, and no sign of man. There were no whaups

crying, or grouse to upbraid my presence. It was still as the grave but for the lilt of the stream ; and it was terribly green. I remembered a line of a song that ploughmen used to whistle—“*The wild glen sae green*”—and I thought how much deeper this green wildness was than any rock and heather. The still slopes and folds of hill seemed to my unquiet eye to stretch to eternity.

At the edge of the burn was a rude mound, embanked like some Roman fort. With a fluttering heart I began to put my rod together. The Fawn dashed and swirled in noble pools, but I could not keep my eyes on it. The green hills shut me in, and the awe of them brooded over me. I was mortally afraid, and not ashamed of my fear. I could not give a name to it, but something uncanny was in the air : not terrible exactly, or threatening, but inhumanly strange. I clutched my rod—the butt and middle piece were put together—and fled the way I had come. I do not think I stopped running till I fell panting by the side of the Cauldshaw among the friendly heather.

II

Twenty years later, when the doings of eleven are a faint memory, chance set me fishing the lower streams of the Fawn. It was a clear June day, but the waters were too low and my basket was light. I fished like an epicure, a cast in each pool sufficing for me ; and presently I had rounded the shoulder of the green hill which cuts the valley in two. They call it the Green Dod, and there is no greener hill in that green country. I found myself in an upland glen, where the Fawn had sunk to a mountain burn. The place was very soothing and quiet, and idly I wandered on, drinking in the peace of the hills. Then something in the contours awakened a memory, and I recalled my boyish esca-

pade. The years have their consolations, for what had once terrified now charmed. I laughed at the scared little sinner, whose trembling legs had once twinkled up those braes. I put by my rod and abandoned myself to the delights of the greenness. Far up on the hill shoulders white sheep were dotted, but the water-side was empty. Not even a water-crow was visible, and in the patches of bog there was no sign of snipe. The place was full of a delicious desolation. There were the strait green sides, the Green Dod at the foot, a green hope at the head, and only the clear singing water stirred in the sunny afternoon.

I found a seat on a mound, and basked in deep content. It was the height of pastoral, yet without sheep or shepherd. The Fawn was a true Border stream, jewelled in sunlight, but wan as death under grey skies. I wondered how I had hitherto missed this happy valley. Nature had wrought it in a kindly mood, and hidden it very far from men. It must, I thought, have had a gracious history. There was no terror in its solitude. I could not imagine the cry of death from the burn, or harsh deeds done on those green lawns. Who had owned it in old days? Perhaps some Roman, pushing north with his bronze soldiers against the Picts, had been caught by its grace, and christened it by the name of his woodland god. True Thomas may have walked by its streams. But its story must have been chiefly of elves and fairy folk, for it wore the fairy livery.

I looked at the mound on which I sat, and saw that it had once been the site of a dwelling. It was all crisp moorland turf, gemmed with eyebright and milkwort, but the rampart had been made by man. Scraping with the butt-end of my rod, I laid bare a chiselled block. This had been no sheepfold or shepherd's cot, but a tower.

The discovery stirred a fresh strain of fancy. Some old raider had had his keep here, and filled the glen

with ill-gotten cattle. I pictured the forays returning over the green hills in some autumn twilight. I saw beacons fired on the tops, and the winter snows reddened with blood. Just then a cloud came over the sun, and the grace of the valley vanished. Now the stream ran wan, and I saw that the glen was wild and very lonely. Terror had dwelt here as well as peace. I remembered the boy of eleven, who on this very mound had picked up his rod and run.

That evening at Hardriding I hunted the library for local histories. They could not tell me much, being mostly the casual compilations of local ministers. But I found one thing of interest. I had been right about True Thomas. It seemed that the Rhymer had honoured the Fawn with a couplet of doubtful Latin :

“ Ubi Faunus fluit
Spes mortalis ruit.”

I had no notion what he meant, and suspected the hand of the Reverend Mr. Gilfillan *circa 1780*.

III

A broken leg gave me some leisure that winter, and I spent it in searching for the history of what I had come to call the Green Glen. For two hundred years back it was plain going. Along with a dozen other valleys it had been swept into the net of the noble house which had built its fortunes on the fall of the turbulent little Border septs. Earlier it had been by turns in the hands of two families, both long perished—Home of Hardriding and Douglas of Cauldshaw. That took me back to the fourteenth century or thereabouts, where the history stopped short. But I found a charter of Melrose a century before, from which it appeared that the lands of Fawn, “the nether and hither glens thereof,” had been in the hands of the

monks, who had profited by the good grazing. A chapel of Our Lady had stood by the burnside, endowed with a hundred merks a year by a certain Simon de Fries in penance for the slaying of an erring wife. There my tale ended, but I hazarded a guess. Fifty years ago a slab was found near Hadrian's Wall with a list of stations on the great road which ran north to the land of the Picts. You will find it copied in the Berlin *Corpus*, and there is much dispute about the identification of the names. One of them is a certain *Fauni Castellum*, which scholars have fastened on a dozen places between Ardoch and Melrose. I was myself convinced that the castellum was the mound in the Green Glen, the more so as Mr. Gilfillan reported a find there of gold coins of the Antonines in 1758. It is true that the place was some miles from the main line of transit, but it would command the hill-roads from the West. Besides, might it not have been a sacred place, half fort, half shrine, an outpost of the dying faith? Why, otherwise, the strange name of the woodland god?

These were all my facts—too few on which to spin the delicate web of history. But my imagination was kindled, and I set to work. If I were right, this glen had a virtue which had drawn to it many races. Little as the recorded history was, it was far more than the due of an inconsiderable howe of the hills. Rome had made it a halting-place and consecrated it to her gods; the Church had built a shrine in it; two famous clans had fought furiously for its sake. My first impression was justified, for it had been no common place. Some ancient *aura* had brooded over its greenness and compelled men's souls.

Bit by bit from monkish Latin, from fragments of ballads, from cumbrous family histories, and from musty chronicles, I built up the shadow of a tale. Rome gave me nothing—the fog of years lay too thick over that greatest of mortal pages; but I hazarded a

guess that the broken satyr's head, found in some unknown Border earthwork and now in the Grange collection, had come from my glen. Perhaps the Melrose monks had found it and copied it in their gargoyles. But of the Christian shrine I had something to tell. The chapel seems to have had an ill reputation for a holy place. The chapter of Melrose in or about 1250 held an inquisition into the doings of a certain John of Fawn, who tended the shrine with unhallowed service. There were complaints of his successor, a monk who bore the name of Lapidarius ; and the grand climax was reached in the fate of one Andrew de Faun, a priest, says the record, who had the unpleasing gift "diabolos convocandi." He was hand in glove with Lord Soulis, whose castle of Hermitage lay some twenty miles over the hills. Of his iniquities it is recorded that the country folk grew weary, and one October night surprised him at the business. He confessed his sins under the pressure of boiling lead, was duly burned, and his ashes cast into Tweed to be borne to the cleansing sea.

To the monks succeeded the Barons, the first being the tragically fated house of Home. But side by side with the record of their moorland wars I found a ballad history. Fawn had caught the fancy of the wandering minstrel. The heroine of the ghastly "Riding of Etterick" had eyes "grey as Fawn." (The other reading "grey as a fawn" is obvious nonsense.) The tryst for true love on Beltane's E'en was the Fawn side, and it was in the Green Glen that young Brokyn found himself asleep on his return from Fairyland.

" And when ye come to Fawn water,"

says the wise wife in " May Margaret,"

" I bid ye lout fu' low,
And say three prayers to Christes grace
Afore ye ride the flow."

In the lovely fragment, "The Thorn of Life," there is a variant, not given by Child, which tells how on Midsummer morning the lady washed herself with dew "clear as dawn"—an absurd literary phrase which spoils the poem. My emendation "Fawn" is, I take it, certain. In the later riding ballads the name is still more frequent. The doomed raider in "Carlisle Town" swears that Fawn will run red as blood ere his wrongs are forgotten. In "Castle Gay" the dying Home craves, like King David, for a draught of Fawn water; and in "Lord Archibald's Good-night" there is a strange line about "the holy wells of Fawn." No doubt the line is corrupt, but the form of the corruption testifies to the spell of the Green Glen.

The Homes of Hardriding marched through disorder and violence to catastrophe. Never more than a hill clan, and kin to no powerful house, they persisted for three centuries by sheer audacity and pride. They held the Fawn glen and built a tower in it, but their real seat was Hardriding in the lower valley. The wave of Douglas aggression flowed round them, but they stoutly resisted, and it was only the power of the great Warden of the Marches that seized Fawn-side for the Cauldshaw branch of his house. The battle in which Piers Home died by the hand of young Cauldshaw was fought in the Green Glen. Presently the Douglases were in trouble with the King, and a younger Piers, under a King's commission, won back his lands and chased Cauldshaw into Northumberland. The Douglas clan was as often as not in treaty with the English Warden, while the Hardriding folk were vehemently Scottish, and, alone of their name, gave a good account of themselves at Flodden. The fortunes of the two houses see-sawed so long as lands were won and kept by the strong arm alone. By-and-by came the day of smooth things, when a parchment was more potent than the sword, and both

Home and Douglas withered, like hill plants brought into a lowland garden.

It was all an unedifying tale of blood and treason, but in reading it I was struck by one curious fact. Every critical event in the fortunes of the two clans befell in the Green Glen. There the leaders died in battle or in duel, and there a shameless victor celebrated his mastery. It was, so to speak, the citadel, of which the possession was the proof of triumph. It can have had but little value in itself, for the tower by the burn was scarcely a fortalice, and was never seriously dwelled in. Indeed, it is referred to not as a castle but as a "bower." When a Douglas defied a Home he summoned him to meet him by the "Bower o' Fawn." This same Bower was the centre of a pretty tale, when for once the bloodstained record emerges into the clear air of pastoral. The Fawn glen did not always pass by war; once it fell to the Douglases by marriage. Marjory of Hardriding, walking one evening by the stream, fell in with the young Douglas, sore wounded in a forest hunt. In the Bower she tended his wounds, and hid him from her fierce clan. Love ripened, and one July morn came the heir of Cauldshaw to Hardriding gates on an errand of peace. But the Home was surly, and the Douglas retired with a bitter denial and an arrow in his corselet. Thereupon Maid Marjory took the matter into her own hands, and rode over the hills to her lover. A gallant lady this, for, after a hurried wedding at the Kirk o' Shaws, she returned with her man to the Fawn Bower to confront an angry father and six angrier brothers. She offered peace or war, but declared that, if war it should be, she herself would fight in the first rank of the Douglases. Whereupon, it is said, old Piers, struck with wonder and delight at the courage he had begotten, declared for peace, and the Green Glen was her dowry.

IV

The thing became an obsession with me, and I could not let this nook of history alone. Weary hours were spent in the search for Homes and Douglasses. Why I wasted my time thus I cannot tell. I told myself it was part of the spell of the Green Glen. "The place was silent and *aware*," as Browning says. I could not think that the virtue had departed and that the romance of Fawn was a past tale. Now it had no visitants save a shepherd taking a short cut or a fisherman with a taste for moorland trout. But some day a horseman on a fateful errand would stir its waters, or the Bower witness a new pastoral. I told myself that the wise years might ordain a long interval, but sooner or later they would ring up the curtain on the play.

A needle in a haystack was a simple quest compared to mine. History, which loves to leave fringes and loose threads, had cut the record of Home and Douglas with her sharpest shears. The two families disappeared within the same decade. Cauldshaw had chosen the king's side in the Covenant wars, and the head of the house, Sir Adam, had been a noted persecutor of the godly. He came to his end by a bullet of the Black Macmichael's somewhere in the hills of Galloway. His son had fought in the Scots Brigade for the French king, and returned about 1710 to find an estate broken by fines and penalties. We see him last riding south with Mackintosh in the 'Fifteen, but history does not tell us of his fate. He may have died with Derwentwater, or, more likely, he may have escaped and lain low till the hunt passed. Cauldshaw was forfeited and sold, and there was an end of it. Thirty years later I find a Douglas, a locksmith in the High Street of Edinburgh, who may have been his son, since he was gently born and yet clearly of no other

known Douglas sept. After that the shears are at work. My note at the end of my researches was, "merged in the burgesses of Edinburgh."

Hardriding showed a similar tale, save that the Homes stood for the Covenant. One of them, Piers or Patrick, swung in the Grassmarket, and was the subject of the eulogies of Wodrow and Patrick Walker. An odd type of saint, his godliness was proved chiefly by his ferocity against the King's officers, for whom he would lie in wait behind a dyke with a musket. He died gallantly, declaiming the 23rd Psalm. The Jacobite rising brought Hardriding round to the side of Cauldshaw. Home and Douglas rode south together, and the fate of the first at any rate is clear. He fell in the rout of Preston, charging with a mouthful of oaths and texts. He left landless sons who disappear into the mist, and the ancient name of Home of Hardriding died in the land. David Hume, the philosopher, in his cups used to claim kin with the house, but it is recorded that David's friends did not take him seriously.

V

About that time I used to try to analyse the impression the Green Glen made upon me. I went to it often and in all weathers, but especially in the soft June days and the flaming twilights of October. At first I thought that the attraction was the peace of it, Wordsworth's "sleep that is among the lonely hills." Certainly it was very quiet and hallowed, with that brooding stillness which is a positive thing and not a mere absence of unrest. I have gone there, worried and distraught, and returned at ease with the world. Once, I remember, I came to it after fighting a forlorn bye-election in an English slum, with my brain fagged and dull and my nerves a torment. The Glen healed

me, plunging me into the deeps of cool old-world shadows. But I soon discovered that the charm was not an opiate, but a stimulant. Its spell was the spell of life. It stirred the blood, comforting failure and nursing hope, but it did not lull to sleep. Once after a bad illness I went to Hardriding to rest, but I could not face the Glen. It only fevered a sick man. Its call was to action, and its ancient genius had no love for weaklings.

Often I tried to test it, to see if others could feel as I did. I was ridiculously unsuccessful. The sportsmen who frequented Hardriding, finding no grouse in the Glen, fought shy of it, and if chance took them there, lamented the absence of heather. "Pretty place," one young man observed to me, "but no more Scotch than my hat. It might be Sussex. Where's the brown heath and shaggy wood? What! There isn't cover for a tomtit. It's a nasty big slice out of Harry's shooting to have that long bare place taking up room." It was too remote for ladies to picnic in, but one who penetrated thus far called it "sweet," and said it reminded her of Dartmoor. The people of the neighbourhood were no better. Keepers took the same view as the Hardriding sportsmen, and the farmer whose lease covered it spoke of it darkly as "Poverty Neuk." "Food for neither man nor beast," he said. "Something might be done with phosphates, but I've no money to spend. It would make a grand dam if any town wanted a water-supply." Good business-like views, but no hint anywhere of the strangeness which to me had made it a kind of sanctuary.

There was one exception, the shepherd of the Nine Stane Rig. He was a young man, with a fiery red head and a taste for poetry. He would declaim Burns and Hogg with gusto, and was noted at "kirns" and weddings for his robust rendering of songs like "When the Kye come Hame," and "Robin Tamson's

Smiddy." I used to accompany him sometimes on his rounds, and he spoke to me of the Green Glen.

"It's a bonny bit," he once said, waving his arm towards the Green Dod. "And there's ae queer thing about it. Sheep 'll no bide in it. Ye may pit a hirsel in it at nicht, and every beast 'll be on the tap o' the rig by the mornin'. How d'ye account for that? Mr. Yellowlees says the feedin's no guid, and that it wants phosphates. I dinna agree wi' him. I've herdit a' my days, and I never saw better feedin' than by yon burnside. I've no just fawthomed it yet, but I've an idea o' my ain. I think the glen is an auld kirkyaIRD. I mind when I herdit in Eskdalemuir there was a bit on the hill whaur Covenanters had been buried, and the sheep were aye sweir to gang near it. Some day I'm thinkin' o' gettin' a spade and howkin'. I might find something queer. . . ."

VI

I came to regard the Green Glen as my own exclusive property, which shared with me a secret. It was a pleasant intimacy, and I had resigned myself to its limits, conscious that the curtain of the past was drawn too close to allow more than one little chink to be seen. Then one day Fate brought Linford across my path.

I had known him slightly for several years. I can see him now as I first knew him, a big solemn young man, too heavy for elegance, and an awkward weight for a horse. We first met one spring at Valescure, and a lonely fortnight established a kind of friendship between us. He was a modest being, full of halting sympathies and interests, for which he rarely found words. His family had been settled for two generations in Australia, sheep-farming in the good days when the big profits were made. His father had

made a second fortune in a gold mine, and disliking the land legislation of the country, had sold his farms and brought his boy to England. An undistinguished progress through a public school and Oxford had left him without a profession, and, his father having died, with no near relations, and a ridiculous amount of money. He should have been a soldier, but somehow had missed his chance. The man was in no way slack, but he gave me the impression of having no niche to fit into. He was very English in speech and manners, but he seemed to stand outside all the ordinary English occupations and look on. Not that he didn't do most things well. He was a magnificent shot, a first-rate horseman, and the best man to sail a boat I have ever met. He read much, and travelled considerably, and had a keen interest in scientific geography. I thought he had found a job when he took a notion of exploring the Brahmaputra gorges, but the expedition fell through and his interest flagged. He belonged to many clubs, and had a few hundred acquaintances ; but beyond myself I don't think he had a friend.

He used to come to see me, and I tried to understand what puzzled him. For puzzled he was—not unhappy or disillusioned, but simply puzzled with life. Somehow he did not fit in with the world around him. I used to think it would have been better if he had never left Australia. There he had a ready-made environment ; here in England he had to make his own, and he did not seem to have the knack of it. People liked him, and thought him, for all his stiffness, a good fellow. But he never accepted anybody or anything as his own ; he was always the observant and sympathetic stranger. I began to realize that my friend, with all his advantages, was desperately homeless.

To myself, as I thought about him, I prescribed marriage. *Vix ea nostra voco* might have been his motto about most things, but in a wife he would find

something his very own. The thing was obvious, but I saw also that he would be a hard fellow to marry. He was hopelessly shy and curiously unimpressionable. I do not remember that he ever spoke to me of any woman, and he avoided every chance of meeting them. I only once saw his tall figure at a dance, when he looked like nothing so much as Marius among the ruins of Carthage.

Hunting was his main hobby, and one January I found myself staying under the same roof with him in the Cottesmore country. He was, as I have said, a bold and fine rider, but he had to know his horse, and on this occasion our host mounted both of us. There was an ugly banked fence where he misjudged his animal's powers, and came down in a heap on a hardish bit of ground. I thought his neck was broken, and prepared for the worst, as I helped three other white-faced men to get him clear. But it was only a slight concussion, a broken finger, and a dislocated shoulder. He had a bad night, but next day was little the worse for his fall, and frost having set in, I spent most of the afternoon in his bedroom.

He wore a ring which I had often noticed, a little engraved carnelian in a heavy setting of Australian gold. In doctoring his hand it had been removed, and now lay on the dressing-table. We were talking idly of runs and spills, and as we talked, I picked it up and examined it.

The stone was old and curious. There was no motto, and the carving seemed to be a heart transfixied by an arrow. I thought it the ordinary trumpery love token—Cupid and his darts—when I noticed something more. The heart was crowned, and the barb transfixing it was not an arrow but a spear.

The sight roused me to the liveliest interest. For the cognizance belonged to one house and one house alone. It was Douglas of Cauldshaw who had carried the family badge with this strange difference. Mary

of Scots, it was said, had given him the spear, for to the last he had stood by that melancholy lady.

"Where did you get this?" I asked.

"What? The ring? It was my father's. An ugly thing."

I looked at it again. "It has an odd crest. Did you ever inquire about it?"

He said No. He knew little heraldry, and didn't want to pretend to what didn't belong to him. Then he corrected himself. He thought that the thing was a family relic, right enough. His father had got the stone in turn from his mother, and had had it reset. He thought, but he wasn't sure, that it had been a long time in his grandmother's family.

"What was her name?" I asked eagerly.

The answer was disappointing. "Brown," he said. "They had the Wooramanga place."

I asked if they came from Scotland. "No," he said. "They were Yorkshire, I think. But wait a bit. I think—yes—I have heard my father say something about the Browns being Scotch—Brouns, you know."

This was a false scent and I tried again. But Linford had nothing to tell me. He had no family papers or jewels or pictures, nothing but the one ring. I could see that he was puzzled at my interest, and to my horror offered to pay the Heralds' College to investigate matters. I made him promise to let the Heralds alone, and tried to get more about his grandmother. She had been a tall, thin old lady, as he remembered her, with a north-country accent. She had disliked Melbourne intensely. That was all he could tell; not a saying or a rhyme or a memory to link her with those who had borne the ring's cognizance.

I heard, however, another startling thing that afternoon. Linford, blushing delightfully, confessed that he was in love. He had no chance, of course, wasn't good enough, and all the rest of it. When I heard that

the lady was Virginia Dasent I was inclined to agree with him. Miss Dasent was very high game for Linford to fly at—or for anybody.

VII

Language is too coarse a medium in which to give a true portrait of Miss Virginia. Airy diaphanous colours and the sharp fineness of marble are needed ; and something more, something to recapture that grace, wild and birdlike and only half mortal, which for three seasons turned all our heads. She was an astounding success. Coming from nowhere, and as innocent as a child of ambition, she made every man her most hopeless and humble servant. I think her charm was her pure girlishness—neither childish nor womanly, you understand. She had the air of one who faces the world frankly but does not accept it. She was a changeling, a wanderer, a dainty solitary figure on the weary old roads of life. I remember thinking, when I first saw her, that she might have stood for a statue of incarnate Wonder.

I knew her a little, well enough to see the hopelessness of my friend's case. She was an American—from one of the Carolinas, I believe ; and Lady Amysfort took her about in London. I do not think that they were related. I hope my friends beyond the Atlantic will forgive me for saying that Miss Virginia was like no American I have ever met. Not that she had any of the sad homeless vulgarity of the denationalized. She was a fervent patriot, and had a delicious variety of the national humour. But I could not fit her in with her great continent. Indeed, I could not place her anywhere in any society. She belonged to some fanciful world of her own ; but all the time she seemed to me to be looking for something—perhaps for her lost material heritage.

I was more interested, however, in Linford than in Miss Dasent. I could find out no more from him about his forbears, but I wondered if the Glen could tell me anything. Supposing I took him there, unprepared, of course, by any warning of mine, might not he feel the spell of it? If he did, I would be convinced of the Douglas blood; for I was certain that not otherwise would so prosaic a being feel so subtle a charm.

I persuaded him to take the Hardriding shootings; with an option to purchase, too, for Harry's finances were now past praying for. The chance came two days before the Twelfth, when he and I were alone in the house. It was a mild, blue August day, with clear distances and a cool breeze, and as we rounded the Green Dod I thought that my Glen was nobly dressed for us. I had hoped for some cry of delight, but none came. Linford stalked through the bent, muttering something about black-game.

We came to the mound by the waterside, Maid Marjory's Bower, and stretched ourselves on the scented turf. Then a curious thing happened to me. A light wind came up the stream, rippling the pools and sending a grey shiver over the grasses. Suddenly I became oppressed with a mortal fear. I must have lain limp and white, looking dumbly at the opposite hill. I had no notion what I feared, but it was worse than my old boyish adventure, for though I longed madly to flee, I knew I could not. The Green Glen was trying me, and if I failed I had lost its secret for ever. I shut my teeth, and for a second or two hung at the limit of my endurance. Then it all passed. I found myself lying back on the mound, desperately sleepy and dripping with sweat, as if I had run twenty miles.

I mopped my brow and looked at Linford. He was quite unperturbed, and had got out his pouch and was filling his pipe. He glanced at me curiously.

" You're in pretty bad condition, old chap," he observed. " You'll founder on the Twelfth if you drip like this in an afternoon saunter."

He got up and stretched himself. " Let's go back," he said. " There isn't a beast or bird in the place. I am glad I came here, for it will keep us from wasting time over it."

I followed him, still shaky and acutely disappointed. The Glen had nothing to say to him. The ring was an accident, and the Cauldshaw stock was still to find. And yet, as we walked home, I began to doubt. The Glen had been not for Douglas or Home alone, but for both. What if a Home were needed to complete the circuit ?

It was a possible explanation. Besides, the extraordinary seizure which had befallen me that afternoon seemed to argue that the visit had not been meaningless. I was perfectly well and normal, and I had sat on the mound a hundred times before. Might it not be that the Glen had been stirred, and was striving to tell us its secret ? Then I began to laugh, and told myself that I was a fool to treat my fancies as solid facts.

VIII

That winter was made memorable to me, and a good many others, by Virginia Dasent. The Amysfords went to Egypt, leaving her very much to her own devices. She hunted a little and spent some time in country houses ; but mostly she was to be found in London, a city for which she had an inordinate love. This was bad for Linford, who stayed devotedly in town, and being deprived of healthful exercise put on flesh and lost spirits. I found him in the club one afternoon in a very bad temper. I alone knew of his hopeless plight, and with me he did not trouble to keep up appearances.

"I get no forrader," he groaned. "She tolerates me as she tolerates everybody else. Lord, how I hate that kind smile of hers! She isn't a woman, Jack. She's an adorable sort of bird that flits about and never settles. You know the way she holds her head forward and peers away beyond you. She's always preening for another flight."

Love was making him a psychologist, for Miss Virginia's maddening charm lay in just that bird-like detachment. We had become very good friends, she and I ; and often of a late afternoon we talked in the Amysforts' big ugly drawing-room. She liked me because I was interested in old things and odd bypaths, for I found that the child bubbled over with romance. A lonely girlhood in some Carolinian manor had given her fancy rich feeding. Half in a world of books, half in a world of pure dreaming, she took her airy way. She had about as much worldliness as St. Theresa, and much less worldly knowledge. Frankly, I was a little afraid for her ; some day disillusion would come, and come cruelly. There was a loneliness about her, as about Linford, but it was the loneliness of a happy preoccupation. Some day those wondering eyes would find the world less marvellous, and then her heart would break. Or would she carry her fresh childlike interest undimmed to the end ? I could not tell, but I argued badly for Linford's chances. He was far too eligible—young, good-looking, preposterously rich. The man who was to win Miss Virginia's heart, I thought, must come riding in the fearless old fashion. Linford was as romantic in the ordinary sense of the word as a Republican senator of Virginia's native land.

That was my first impression, but I found cause to alter it slightly. As I came to know her better, new avenues opened up in her soul. She had an excellent brain, very clear, shrewd and subtle, and behind all her fancies I was aware of a solid rock of common

sense. She was not a ready talker, and never rhapsodized. Little odd phrases, a shrug and a laugh, gave the key to her whimsical world. But on a matter of prosaic fact I found her amazingly practical. More than once she offered me advice, with a little wise air which spoke of youth, but with a penetration, too, which took my breath away. I put my surprise into words. "Of course I'm practical," she said. "I'm more than half Scotch, you know."

I thought nothing of it at the time, for American girls have a habit of being either Scotch or early Norman. I remember asking her if she had ever been to Scotland, and she said—No; not yet. She had not had time. But some day . . .

I was inclined to be a little angry with both her and Linford. He went about like a sheep, a ridiculous figure of purposeless melancholy, and the deeper he sank in this mood the worse it was for his chances. As for the lady, I began to think her almost inhuman. I wondered if she were not perfectly heartless, hollow within like an Ell-woman. She seemed unconscious of the havoc she was causing everywhere. I think I would have preferred a common flirt to that unearthly aloofness. But her eyes used always to make me revise my judgments: they were so innocent and young. Some day she would awaken, I told myself. Some day the sleeping princess would be kissed into life. But I was pretty certain that, unless a miracle happened, it would be none of Linford's doing.

It was one morning in the Park in early May that she exploded the mine under my feet. She had been riding with Linford, and turned, as I came up, to accompany me. I don't know what they had been talking about, but her eyes were shining, her colour high, and her lips very tight.

"We have been discussing Scotch places," she volunteered. "It is very tiresome. I wanted a place, and Mr. Linford seems to have got a long lease

of it. He offered to make it over to me, but of course that was impossible. It's a great nuisance, for I had set my heart on it."

I asked the name, and even as I asked I think I guessed the answer.

"Hardriding," she said. "A little old place in the Borders. My family lived there long ago, and I have always meant to make a pilgrimage to it. Caroline Amysfort is going to Bayreuth, so I shall set up as hostess on my own account. If I can't get Hardriding I must have Cauldshaw. Will you come and stay with me?"

I listened to her, I hope, with an impassive face, but inwardly I was a volcano of excitement. Hardriding and Cauldshaw! Home and Douglas! Was the circuit by some amazing chance to be completed? I wondered how soon I could decently make an appointment with Miss Virginia and get the whole story. She was going away for the week end, but would be free on Tuesday, rather late. I hugged my impatience for three beastly days.

I had expected a fragment, and found instead a complete and well-authenticated tale. I blessed that lovable American seriousness about genealogies. There was the pedigree neatly inscribed, with excerpts from registers and letters, as business-like, as irrefutable, as a share certificate. After old Sir Piers fell at Preston his eldest son, Gideon, fled to France, and thence to the Canadas. He fought under the French flag, and rose to a colonelcy before he fell at Quebec. He had married a Frenchwoman, and their son—Lewis, I think—took to the sea and did good trade in the smuggling and privateering line along the New England coast. He settled in North Carolina, and being rich from his ventures, bought a handsome property, and built a manor-house in the colonial style. With his grand-daughter the male line of Home—Miss Virginia pronounced it to rhyme with "loam"—ended.

She married a Dasent, son of a neighbouring squire, and was Miss Virginia's grandmother. There it was, all set down in black and white, and very prettily she expounded it to me. I had found the Hardriding stock at last. It had come back to me out of the mist with ample credentials.

Miss Virginia at Cauldshaw, Linford at Hardriding, and between them the Green Glen ! Surely the stage was being set at last for the play. My first impulse was to tell her the whole romance. I pictured her delight ; I saw the prosaic Linford take on the colour of poetry. But a scruple deterred me. It would be breaking faith with the Green Glen. If the spell were there it needed no preparation of mine for its working. Those starry influences called for respectful treatment. I would go to Hardriding, and some day—some mellow autumn day—Miss Virginia would cross the hills, and Linford would be there by the Bower to meet her !

Meanwhile all that summer the course of true love ran badly. The two were friends after a fashion, but Linford was such a clumsy and uneasy being, and Miss Virginia so swift and evasive, that it seemed impossible that that friendship could ripen. I got very sick of the whole business, angry with Linford, and puzzled about the lady. At one moment I called her inhuman, at another angelic ; but whatever view one took (and after all they came to the same conclusion), she was the most heartbreaking beauty. Her wild childlike eyes looked through one as if to a pleasant country beyond. There is a Greek fable, isn't there ? about some hero who needed the touch of his mother the Earth to give him strength. I wondered if she would ever find that earth-kinship, which means common humanity.

IX

In early August the Lammas floods were high, so that sultriness was purged from the air and the world left clean and rain-washed and sweet-scented. I was staying at Cauldshaw, in a small party which tried in vain to induce its dancing hostess to be still. She was in wild spirits, out at all hours, a crony of shepherds, already learned in the ways of the moors. She had come back, she said, to her own country, and lived every hour in a whirl of delight and wonder. The long round-shouldered hills, the clear burns, the homely simplicity of the old land ravished her heart. I counted the days till I could take her to the Green Glen.

Then the party melted away, and it was arranged that she should pay a visit of state to Hardriding. I also was bidden, and Linford spent his days in a fever of expectation. Miss Virginia was scrupulous about the details. She would walk across the hills by the old raiding road from Cauldshaw. I showed her the way, which traversed the Green Glen, and on the map I pointed out the Bower. She clapped her hands with delight at my tale—the barest sketch—of the Home doings. “What an adventure!” she cried. “I shall tell you all about it at dinner. I feel like a princess coming home to her kingdom.”

I sincerely hoped that she was. If the Fates were kind this airy spirit should feel the antique spell of earth, and I dared to think that two wanderers might find a home.

To this hour I remember every incident of that autumn day. It was the 3rd of September. The morning broke cold and misty, but by ten o’clock the sun had burned up the rime, and the hills slept in a bright windless calm. I was shooting with Linford, and set out from Cauldshaw at eleven o’clock. Miss

Virginia was to leave after luncheon, and if she followed my directions, would be at Hardriding by six. She would reach the Green Glen about four o'clock, and I laid my plans accordingly.

I shot vilely, for I was full of a curious sense of anticipation. So was Linford, but nothing could impair his skill. We talked very little, I remember; but it took some manœuvring on my part to have the afternoon beat where I wanted it. Linford would have had us try the moors near the house, for his mind was always turning to Hardriding; but after some persuasion I got him to keep to the hills by the Nine Stane Rig, where we looked down on the Green Glen. Had I told him that Miss Virginia was walking, he would have set off then and there to meet her, and spoiled everything. He kept asking me when she would start. "She'll have to go round by the Red Ford," he repeated, "and that means Hardriding at tea-time. We needn't stay too long up here. Hardriding is her family place, so to speak, and I want to be there to welcome her."

Shortly after three we stood on the summit of the Dun Rig, and as I watched the green shoulders of the Fawn Hope I saw a figure cross the sky-line. Then I told Linford the truth. I bade him go up the Glen to meet her and wait for her at the Bower. He looked at me shyly. "You arranged all this?" he asked. "Thanks very much, old man. You've been a pretty good friend to me."

I set off for Hardriding without a glance behind. The Glen was now no place for me. Looking back at my frame of mind, I can see nothing but exhilaration. Some great thing was about to befall two people whom I loved. I had no doubt of the virtue of the place. By devious paths I had brought back to it its old masters. It had whispered its secret to me, and I had repaid it. For the moment I felt that time was not, that death was little, and change a mockery. The

wise years let nothing die, and always the circle came full again, bringing back lost hopes and dreams. The still and golden afternoon spoke the same message to my heart. I felt the serene continuance of all things, the sense of something eternal behind the trivial ways of man.

I reached Hardriding a little after four, and according to my plan sat down to read and smoke. But I soon found that idleness was impossible. I was strung too high with expectation. I wandered into the library, and then into the garden, but my eyes were always turning to the shoulder of hill which marked the opening of the Fawn Glen. Then I resolved to go to meet Linford. Whatever had happened, it would be right for me to welcome Miss Virginia to Hardriding.

Before I had crossed the lawns my mood changed utterly. I suddenly became a prey to black forebodings. The doggerel Latin of True Thomas rang in my head like the croak of a raven :

“ Ubi Faunus fluit
Spes mortalis ruit.”

I tried to laugh at it. I told myself that the verses were no doubt the work of a foolish eighteenth-century parson. What harm could follow the meeting of two friends in a hill glen where their forbears had fought and loved ? But I reasoned in vain. A deadly depression overmastered me. The light had gone out of the sky, and the bent, all yellow in the westering sun, seemed wan as death.

“ Where Fawn flows
Man’s hope goes.”

The dolorous refrain would not leave me.

I emerged from the park into the water-meadows where Fawn runs deep among flags and meadow-

sweet. Beyond them I came to the lower glen, where the fir-clad slopes leave a thin strip of pasture by the stream. Here I should have met the two, but there was no sign of them. I looked at my watch and found it after five.

Then I began to quicken my pace. My depression had turned to acute anxiety. Before me was half a mile of open strath, and then the Green Dod, where the Glen turned sharply to the right. I ran that half-mile with dread in my heart of what I might see beyond it. But when I came to the Green Dod there was still no sign of a human being. The Fawn flows round the shoulder of hill in a narrow defile, at the upper end of which begins the Green Glen. I resolved to wait there, for I realized that I could not enter the Glen. I can give no reason for this, but I knew the truth of it. My feet could not have carried me round the shoulder of hill.

I did not wait long. Suddenly down the defile came a single figure. It was Linford, but even to my distraught sight a different Linford from him I had known. As I have said he was a big fellow, a little ungainly, a little afraid of his size. But now he was a noble figure of a man, and as he strode along there was a strange mastery and dignity in him. But why was he alone? I blinked my eyes, for I saw that he was not alone. He carried in his arms something slim and white and very quiet. I crouched behind a boulder as he came near, but he had no eyes for anything but his burden. His head was bent over it, and his face was wild and drawn with grief. Then I saw that a fair head lay limply in the crook of his arm, and that the face was very pale. . . .

The doctors called it heart failure. Miss Virginia, said one of them in a moment of poetry, had for years had a frail chariot for her body and the horses of her spirit had driven too fiercely. She must have had

heart trouble, though no one had diagnosed it. The hill walk from Cauldshaw had been too much for her. The same man spoke wisely about the evils of our modern life. "Most people to-day," he said, "have temperaments that prey on their bodies. They must live at white heat and the shell cracks. . . ."

Years afterwards, when time had taken the edge off his grief, Linford told me something of what happened. "She met me, looking very well and jolly, and we walked to the place you call the Bower. You may laugh at me, but I tell you I had a presentiment that something was going to happen, but I couldn't be sure whether it was good or bad. . . . She looked all round the Glen and sighed happily, as if she had found what she liked very much. Then suddenly she gave a little cry and went very white. I caught her, and saw that she was all in a shiver. She was staring at the burn, and her eyes were round and frightened like a deer's. Then she smiled again, and turned to me with a look—Oh, my God, I can never forget it ! It was so kind and happy and . . . She must have cared for me all the time, and like a blind fool I didn't know it. She put her arms round my neck and said, 'My ain true love'—I suppose she was quoting from a Scotch song. And just as I was bursting with joy I felt her cheek grow cold. . . ."

Now it is a curious thing, but in the *Scotichronicon* of Hume of Calzeat—it is in manuscript, and I do not think any one living has read it besides myself—there is a version of the story of Maid Marjory. And according to that version, when the lady confronted her father in the Green Glen, she put her arm around the Douglas's neck, and said, "My ain true love."

THE RETURN JOURNEY

(BARBARA ISLIP)

Two spirits were wandering on the outskirts of Heaven. They were new-comers of a year's standing. One of them had left the mortal part of him in a neat lobelia-bordered grave in a London cemetery, and the other his very youthful dust in a deep shell crater near Bullecourt. They fell to telling about the world that they had left at such a supremely interesting moment, and to wondering what was now happening there.

"Perhaps one of the guardian angels would take us back for a little while. They are always going to and fro, and they seem a very friendly lot," said the boy.

At that moment they caught sight of one smoothing his wings and cleansing his robes from the soilure of the earth. As they reached him he said confidentially: "You have no idea what a difficult time I am having. I am guardian angel to a child of two years old in a back street in London. Yesterday his mother took him for a day's outing, and my whole time was spent in preventing horses from trampling on him when he darted into the road, and making motor-drivers swerve in order not to run over him. Then I had to change the current of his mother's thoughts when she wanted to give him a third helping of stale tinned salmon, and finally to keep him from getting under the feet of the combatants in a

drunken brawl, of which she was at once the inspiration and centre. It was late in the night till I could take a holiday from the task of watching at the head of his bed, and rise into the pure air of the sky. But I may be wearying you," he broke off courteously.

"No, no," said the elder spirit eagerly. "I was a special constable myself during the war."

"Then you can sympathize," said the angel, and they talked shop for some time.

The two spirits told him of their wish to revisit the earth. "Just to see what has happened—the end of the story," said the boy.

"No," said the other spirit, a trifle sententiously. "I want to see the new England arisen from the ashes of war like a phoenix."

The angel gazed long and rather sadly at them, and asked them gently if there was nothing that he could tell them instead. But they begged him to take them back to see for themselves, and at last he consented.

They drifted softly down through layers of pure ether, until a faint aroma of earth came floating around them. They had reached the smoke mantle which wraps London about so closely. The largest ant-heap in the world was busier than ever. The streets were choked with human ants, all getting into each other's way. They pushed each other off the steps of omnibuses and trams, and off the edge of pavements, and seemed to take a wilful pleasure in making everybody's movements more toilsome. It was fatiguing only to watch them for a few minutes.

"Could I go first to the House of Commons?" said the elder spirit wistfully, and the angel remembered that he had been a prominent member of that body, and that his death had caused a great flutter in the political world. He was compelled to slip away for a moment to his duties, but, finding his deputy guardian angel carefully preventing his

charge from damaging himself with the sardine tin and winkle shell which he was banging cymbal-wise together, he returned to the two spirits.

He found them, ironically enough, in the Distinguished Strangers Gallery, listening patiently while member after member rose and sat down with monotonous regularity of gesture and speech. After a long time, "Let us go," said the elder spirit suddenly, with a sigh, and the Member for East Hornsey remarked to his colleague of North Hoxton that the draughts in the House were "something chronic."

They were in the dense streets again, and, guided by the angel, all that day and night made an unseen back-ground to many deeds and words.

The next afternoon a big tree on the Heath at Hampstead held them invisible in her shadow. The sky, evenly blue without a flaw of white, seemed tightly stretched above the city. Dust flew up in clouds from a roadway near by, and a hum like that of a gigantic beehive rose from below. The angel looked at his companions. Their impalpable forms wore to him an air of shadowy disconsolateness, of surprised melancholy. The air quivered with the heat, the shadow of the tree lay level and motionless on the tumbled grass with its bald patches of earth telling of the wear and tear of humanity.

There was a long silence; then the elder spirit said wearily, "Why did I ever return? This world is intolerable."

"Don't take it so hard," said the boy gently. "You see," he said confidentially to the angel, "he thought it was all going to be changed after the war—the world, I mean. Of course, he never saw any fighting in France or he would have learnt patience, as we did. . . ."

"Patience," said the other spirit, "patience! Was that unfathomable sea of blood shed only that idle people might safely crowd and jostle each other in the

streets, in an orgie of joyless extravagance? Patience! I expected to see a nation sobered and saddened by war, uplifted by its great task of reconstruction. Instead, I see some classes amusing themselves with hectic passion, others squandering, others striking—all slack and material to the core. . . . ”

“ It can’t be helped,” said the boy.

The other spirit went on unheeding. “ Look at the houses we went into to-day. In some they were rich, but did they reflect on the price that had been paid to keep them alive and safe, and wish to make sacrifices? No, in some the talk was of nothing but the height of prices, the discomforts of travel, the scarcity of servants. In others, people sat round tables loaded with food, and one and all declared that now the war was over they hoped never to work hard again.”

“ They weren’t worth bothering your head about,” said the boy compassionately.

“ Then the House of Commons! I dreamed of it purified and ennobled. To-day I heard them talk the same clap-trap. I looked straight into the hearts of many whom I had thought fine and noble, and saw that they were office-seekers and caucus-mongers. Above all I felt a paralysing sense of unreality . . . of detachment from real life. . . . ”

“ Well, it never was much of a place at any time,” said the boy soothingly. “ And you seem to have forgotten all the quite decent people that we saw on our wanderings, doing the decent quiet things and keeping the world going. . . . ”

“ I mean the nation in the mass. Those were only the few.”

“ I expect you used to read the papers too much,” said the boy wisely. “ We used to look through them in the trenches—‘ a new Heaven and a new earth,’ and all that sort of thing ; but we didn’t bother. We fought for England as she was, and though we hoped

she might grow to be greater still, we didn't worry—things were too big for that out there. . . ."

"I wrote in the papers," said the elder spirit, "and I believed every word I said; but now, after these five years, when human nature climbed unscaled heights of sacrifice, it has fallen again into the mud, and greed and laziness stalk hand in hand over the earth. And you and the other boys who gave your lives, who renounced all love, all pleasure, all the wonder and glory of the world—now that you have seen all this, tell me, was your sacrifice worth while?"

There was no answer. A tiny breeze stirred in the leaves of the tree, and there came a faint sound which might have been a sigh, and then silence.

"Come with me," said the angel, and they rose above the smoke into the radiant air. It was May, and England had adorned herself with an especial glory. Waves of warm air rose filled with the scents of flowers and young leaves, and the land was bathed in a light at once mellow and brilliant.

The angel, who had flown in silence, paused at last on a stone bridge which spanned a stream, in the heart of a shadowed green valley. Beside the bridge, below the level of the road, stood a group of grey buildings whose harmony of line showed the hands of the craftsmen of an earlier day. The swinging sign, the long wooden settle by the door, the windows flung hospitably open, welcomed the traveller. In front two old spaniels lay and dozed in the sunshine. The hills on each side of the valley fell gently in cool green undulations. The road which crossed the bridge ran straight through an avenue of beech trees, and lost itself over the edge of the hill.

There was a deep peace around them, though there were many busy natural sounds. The river beneath the bridge pushed its way through forget-me-nots with a continuous purring and gurgling. A pig rooted in the meadow beside it, grunting peacefully

to himself. Birds called to each other from trees whose leaves made a delicate whispering. On the soft hillside sheep were making their way slowly along an invisible track, looking like a moving string of curious pearls. Somewhere in the distance a church clock chimed the hour with a precise music.

"I saw the Romans make the road and build the bridge," said the angel softly. "I saw knights in armour ride to battle over the hill. Rupert's Cavaliers came down it half out of their saddles, while the Ironsides clattered and thundered after them. I have seen this country scarred and bruised by wars . . ."

Down the hill, towards the bridge, came two children. The taller of the two was crowned with cowslips, and held a ball of them, like an orb, in her hand. The younger was gravely blowing a dandelion clock. As they crossed the bridge one of the spaniels growled and yawned in his sleep. The children paused to look at him and then ran on laughing to each other, and the busy quiet reigned again.

"I'm glad I died for this," said the boy.

TROUBLES WITH A BEAR IN THE MIDI

(ST. JOHN LUCAS)

I

THE whole affair, like so many other poignant episodes of the masculine career, had a Beautiful Lady as its first cause. She was young, Russian and romantic, and was certainly the most impressive personality in the ancient town of A., where I was an inconspicuous sojourner. I will not throw spots on the sun by endeavouring to describe her beauty, nor will I soil the memory of her cosmopolitan charm, her wit, her amusing petulance, by attempting to reflect these qualities in the dull mirror of my prose. I can only say that her absence from any place where one happened to be was an acute personal loss. It was she who, from her rooms on the first floor of the hotel, first perceived the disastrous plight and engaging air of the hero of this history. The hotel overlooks the market-place, where the statue of a great Provençal poet (the only modern statue that I know which contrives to look unconscious of its trousers) stands proudly regardant. It was market day, and the little square was filled with groups of honest and swarthy rustics, who shouted simultaneously in a dialect that was difficult to the foreign ear ; the café at the corner drove a roaring trade in high-coloured fluids, and the literary person in the hotel abandoned his work in

despair and leant on his balcony to survey the gay world.

I was the literary person. I had been contemplating the scene for some minutes when I observed that all the groups began to consolidate into a single one, from which a grand hum of excitement arose. The crowd was too thick for me to discover its centre of interest, but I heard the unpleasant sound of a concertina; and at intervals I thought that I saw a peculiar furry object which rotated, as astronomers say, on its own axis. I was still engaged in trying to discover the exact nature of this object, when feminine cries arose from the window immediately above my own. I looked up discreetly, and saw the Beautiful Lady making gestures expressive of impotent annoyance. Her eyes met mine, and she pointed a dramatic finger at the crowd.

"Go and stop them," she said. "Send them away, send them home. They are cruel. They are many to one and it is not fair, as you say in England. Please, please go!"

When I thought afterwards of this appeal it dawned on me that her allusion to English principles of fair play was an excellent stroke of diplomacy. At the moment I was bewildered, and stared at her in wild surmise.

"What is it?" I asked. "Are they mobbing an unpopular priest?"

The Beautiful Lady shook her head very energetically and wrung her fair hands. "Much, much worse!" she cried. "It is a bear, a tiny bear, and it is tired, and the man is sticking it with a great spear to cause it to valse. Oh, please go down and save it!" She was terribly disturbed; I imagined that, being a Russian, she had a special patriotic interest in bears. In any case my duty was plain. I made a gesture expressive of courage and devoted obedience, and descended into the square. But I was

not all at sorry that she had described the bear as tiny.

The crowd was so thick that I had great difficulty in apologizing myself into its centre, but at last I succeeded, and stood face to face with the object of interest. He was, as the Beautiful Lady had said, a bear, but he was not so small as I had fondly anticipated, being at least four feet high when he stood on two legs. This feat seemed to be his only accomplishment, but subsequently I discovered that he laid him down and pretended to die whenever the stirring air of the "Marseillaise" was performed on cornets, concertinas, or other instruments. I have never been able to discover the exact significance of this act, but presume that it was supposed to depict the fate which awaited all the enemies of France. He looked extremely tired, dirty, and hot, but in spite of all he contrived to preserve an expression of roguish good-humour which was irresistible. He wore a muzzle and a little toque full of feathers, which obviously dated from the days of Rostand's "Chantecler," and was most unbecoming; an iron girdle encircled his waist, and from the girdle depended a heavy chain which was held by his companion.

The latter was a Basque—member of a community with which I am denied all intellectual commerce owing to linguistic difficulties—and though his race is ancient and mysterious and his language a marvel to philologists, I am prepared to state with emphatic confidence that he was not a good man. He was armed (in addition to the concertina) with a stout stick, to which was lashed a steel spike about three inches in length, and with this horrid weapon he had so prodded the hinder parts of the bear that they were covered with sores and most painful to the charitable eye. The Basque was not only a bad man and squinted; he was a bad musician; he expressed from his concertina sounds which very fairly repre-

sented the wailing of many tigers caught by a flood, but were absolutely remote from all harmony, ancient or modern. He worked the concertina with a frenzied energy and sang fearsomely through his nose, pausing at frequent intervals to set aside the instrument and administer the steel spike to the bear. That unfortunate beast would rotate ungracefully for a few moments and would then sit down heavily, like a fat lady. Altogether it was a sorry spectacle, but the crowd seemed to enjoy it, especially the prodding, which made them laugh hugely. An overgrown boy with skeleton bare legs, a very high collar, and hair offensively pomaded, contributed to the general amusement by beating the bear with a smart cane whenever the animal was near him.

I stood for some time wondering how I was to act. It was of little use to invite the Basque, through a probably unsympathetic interpreter, to prod the bear less ; the only result of that course of action would be that the Basque would almost certainly prod me. He looked capable of any desperate deed. I glanced up at the hotel ; the Beautiful Lady was still at her window, and evidently had observed my progress through the crowd ; she made incomprehensible signals with both hands and her head. Perplexed, I had turned again to look at the bear, when a man by my side, a gaunt person with a grizzled beard who had displayed less amusement at the performance than his neighbours, addressed me in French. His remarks were to the effect that it was a poor sort of show, and that in his youth he had seen better Basques bring finer bears to the town. Bears were most intelligent and sympathetic beasts, he informed me, if they were treated well, but this one—and he shrugged eloquently.

A sudden inspiration came to me, and I inquired if bears in general were costly to buy, and if he knew what the Basque would have paid for this particular

one. He seemed to think it improbable that the Basque had paid anything at all, but named a modest sum as the usual price. I looked again at the window ; the Beautiful Lady was still there, and her attitude was almost angular with suspense. I turned again to my neighbour and asked him if the Basque spoke French ; he replied that it was possible, but that he knew that the Basque usually conversed in the dialect of the district. My neighbour was obviously a son of the Midi ; I put on my best manner and asked him if he would do me the immense favour of acting for a moment as interpreter. He seemed surprised, but consented very politely. When, however, I explained that I wished to buy the bear, he looked completely mystified, and assured me that the bear was the feeblest of its kind, no artist, and quite incapable of bringing fortune to any one who travelled round with it. Apparently he had jumped to the conclusion that I was a peripatetic master of the concertina. I should have been wise if I had left him with this illusion, for when I began to explain that it made English people sad to see an animal in that deplorable state, he looked extremely uncomfortable, stared very hard into space, and began to move away, muttering inaudible phrases. He had finally classed me as a lunatic. A moment later he had vanished in the crowd, and after a vain attempt to follow him I was about to engage the Basque in person, when a shy young man with watery eyes and a pale face laid his hand on my sleeve. He explained that he had been unable to avoid hearing some of the previous conversation, that he had been much interested by my desire to purchase the bear, that he knew the Basque personally, and would, if I so desired, act as interpreter.

His aspect did not inspire me with confidence. I anticipated that he would fall an easy victim to the repartee of the Basque, who was certainly the most

truculent barbarian that I had ever had the misfortune to see. But I was wrong. The young man approached and spoke to the Basque, who stared at him savagely for a moment, grinned, and shouted some phrase which I could not understand, but which was obviously offensive. The mild young man instantly proved himself a lion in disguise. Placing his nose within an inch of that of the Basque, he emitted an appalling torrent of invective for the space of two minutes, accompanying his remarks with gestures of the most extravagant ferocity. The Basque made several futile attempts at interruption which were almost pitiful, and at the end of the two minutes he was a wilted man. He spoke, and probably demanded some exorbitant sum, for the young man fell upon him again with undiminished fury. Then the Basque tugged the bear towards him and embraced it with sentimental fondling ; the bear, who was obviously unused to such treatment, looked grotesquely uncomfortable. Finally, after some exchange of words, the young man turned towards me and named a moderate sum as the price at which the Basque was prepared to sell the animal.

It was then that I was seized with a qualm, and remembered that I was a stranger in a strange land, with no knowledge of the concertina and very little of natural history. I asked the young man with the watery eyes, if in the event of my buying the bear, the Basque would be deprived of all means of livelihood, but the young man was convinced that the Basque would have no difficulty in finding another of the species. According to him, bears in the Basque country were as plentiful as mushrooms. Still I hesitated ; then I looked up at the hotel windows. The Beautiful Lady was watching me anxiously. I pulled out my pocket-book and bought the bear.

The ironical laughter of the stalwart sons of Provence, as they watched me inducing the bear to walk

to the hotel, still rings in my ears. I am of a retiring nature, and had never before been an object of interest to more than one or two persons. The bear was smitten with appalling terror when he found that a stranger had become his ward, and resolutely sat down after every third step. The pomatumed youth smote him with his cane, and I boxed the ears of the pomatumed youth, who burst into a passion of weeping. I half expected the crowd to exact vengeance for this violent deed, but it only grinned more vastly, and implored me to smack the bear's head also. The painful scene reached its climax at the door of the hotel, where the proprietor, usually a taciturn personage, was dancing like a dervish and uttering fantastic cries. By this time I was completely bewildered by the noise of the crowd and the immense responsibility which I had incurred, but when I surveyed the agitated limbs of the proprietor the humour of the situation laid hold of me suddenly, and I fell into a mad mood. I began to laugh; I believe that I solemnly introduced the bear as one of my long-lost friends. The proprietor ceased from his capers with alarming swiftness, and put on all the dignity of a strong man who has been deeply outraged.

"It does not come here," he said briefly. "It goes away. This"—he indicated the whole hotel with one superb gesture—"this is not a Barnum-Bailey. I am the father of progeny, but that imports little. Even if I were celibate I would refuse to allow the presence of a savage and dirty beast. I recommend you, monsieur, to discover the lodging of the bear. I will then instantly dispatch your possessions to the same address."

I attempted to reason with him.

"Perhaps, monsieur," I said, "you would be so good as to lend me a stable for the use of the animal, who is, you perceive, intensely amiable." At this

moment, most unfortunately, the concierge of the hotel came to the door, and the bear, on perceiving him, made a determined movement in the direction of his ankles. I discovered afterwards that the poor animal, for some unknown reason, had a dislike for any one who wore a uniform. The concierge vanished like thistledown in the wind, and the proprietor looked me straight in the eyes.

"Never in the world," he said, "since he would devour my horses."

"Impossible, monsieur," I retorted ; "he is a vegetarian by habit and by heredity." The proprietor made a gesture denoting the most languid interest.

"Ah!" he observed, "absolutely like monsieur." This was true, for I had desisted from eating meat during my sojourn in Provence, but I disliked the tone of the remark.

"At least," I said, growing impatient, "you will allow me to chain him for a time in the stable yard?"

"And have all the riff-raff of the countryside coming to stare at him all day long? Never, never, never."

He folded his arms, pointed his beard at the sky, and appeared to be lost in intimate self-communion. I knew, however, that he was enjoying this unparalleled opportunity for cutting a figure before the crowd which was now swarming round the hotel. I noticed that the Basque occupied a prominent position in its front rank ; he seemed to be in the highest spirits. Certainly the situation was badly in need of an end. I glanced round at the crowd, and was on the verge of making an impassioned appeal to it for a temporary lodging, when a diversion was created by the appearance of the proprietor's sister, an amiable spinster of mature years, who wore a false front and a changeless smile. Usually she sat in a glass case in the hall, simpering helplessly over the accounts of the hotel, which were really quite beyond her comprehension,

but now Providence had tempted her to take the air. She saw my monster at once, and without any symptom of surprise or fear walked straight up to him.

"Ah! it is Toto," she remarked, "the poor Toto." And she sat down on the lowest step and called the bear. The bear shuffled towards her, and put down his head to be scratched. "We are old friends," she explained to me; then added politely, "Monsieur is a friend of Toto also? And likes to lead him about? That amuses people, it seems."

I saw my opportunity, and turned dramatically to the proprietor.

"You see, monsieur," I said, "the gentle nature of the beast. He suffers tender women and innocent babes to play with him. And it is to this timid and trusting creature that you refuse a temporary lodg-ing—this pet of your own family! Monsieur, I can-not refrain from the word. You are unreasonable."

The proprietor was visibly staggered, but he attempted to remain obdurate. "Desist, Hélène," he said to his sister, "he is utterly infested with fleas, and for the rest unsafe." Then he turned to me and spoke in English. "I do not care, I do not mind one bit," he said rapidly. "He shall get out. He shall go away. He will ruin the good name of my hotel. My *clientèle* will go to the place opposite."

"Not a bit of it," I replied; "they'll all come here on purpose to play with him."

"And he will eat them; he will eat all, all!" said the proprietor. "It is no use; he goes. He goes right off."

The business began to look desperate. At the very moment, however, when I had decided that it was absolutely imperative for me to go forth into the town and hunt lodgings for the bear, there was a swishing sound of skirts, and the Beautiful Lady entered the fray. She ignored the landlord, and went straight to the bear with a large handful of the land-

lord's sugar. In spite of his muzzle the bear contrived to consume this offering with remarkable swiftness. The Beautiful Lady then removed the Parisian toque from the animal's head, patted him gently, and turned to me.

"So you have bought him," she said; "how very, very nice of you. And now you will take him to England and he will live to a fine old age in your park, and you will never play the concertina to him. You have done a very good thing."

I did not consider it a suitable occasion for explaining that all my vegetable and territorial possessions consisted of three window-boxes in a London flat, and that the prospect of my owning a park was about as probable as that of spending my declining years in the Kremlin. "Yes, I've bought him," I said, "and now I don't know what to do with him. Of course," I added, and a ray of hope shone suddenly across the mists of the future,—"of course, if you would care for him he is yours."

The Beautiful Lady smiled sweetly at me, but shook her head with decision.

"You are very kind," she answered, "but what could I do with him? Even if he could be induced to sit still in the auto he would frighten my maid to death. And, in any case, I could not take him back to Russia. My father is very peculiar, and would probably shoot him at once. He is like an Englishman in that: he thinks that all animals are made to be shot. But *you* are different; you will be very kind." And she looked at me with shining eyes. Her expression inspired me to behave heroically, but in my inmost soul I wished that the bear was far away in his early home beyond the Pyrenean pines.

"I must find a place for him to stay in," I said. "You don't, I suppose, happen to know of any one who lets comfortable lodgings for bears? The proprietor refuses to take him in."

The Beautiful Lady made no audible comment on this piece of information, but elevated her eyebrows loftily and turned slowly towards the proprietor. "Ah, monsieur!" she murmured, and continued to gaze at him. The effect of this treatment was remarkable; after a moment the proprietor began to writhe and buzz in the manner of an irritated old gentleman in a French farce. "Mademoiselle, it is impossible, impossible," he stuttered at last. "I cannot harbour wild beasts; I am no menagerie. And there is not room for a cat."

The Beautiful Lady looked at him with eyes full of pity. "No room!" she said; "then you are ignorant, monsieur, that the second garage is empty? Or are you determined that this poor animal shall wander homeless throughout the night until, rendered desperate by hunger and weariness, he forces his way to some domestic hearth or attacks some harmless wayfarer? If such a disaster occurs, monsieur, who but you will be responsible?" And she folded her arms and stood, like a vision of outraged Justice, looking down on the bald patch that crowned the proprietor's head.

The proprietor became the victim of an acute attack of Southern frenzy. "But this is not to be borne!" he cried, "that strangers should bring savage beasts to my house and then insult and threaten me because I refuse to take them in! There is a law against such treatment; it is formulated in the Code, in the Code of Napoleon!" His voice died away in a hoarse rattle; he became purple, terrible of aspect. The fair Hélène besought him to calm himself, the crowd pressed nearer with wondering eyes. But the Beautiful Lady was unperturbed; she smiled at him and laid her hand on his arm.

"And if I beg this favour of you, you will refuse, monsieur?" she said in thrilling tones. "I, at least, am not a stranger, and if I ask you to lend me the second garage for one night, you will fly into a passion

and say terrible things and glare at me like an enraged lion ? Ah, monsieur, is it wholly kind ? Yet they say that the men of your Department are, above all, chivalrous to women."

She continued to look at him, and at length he began to collapse slowly but perceptibly. "Ah ! if it were your bear, Princess," he murmured at last, with a reluctantly gallant bow.

"Call me mademoiselle," she said, "and assume that it is my bear. For the present this gentleman has lent it to me, and I am therefore bound to see it housed and fed. Remember, too, that the bear is to Russians as the Gallic cock to the French ; we cannot endure to see one of them in distress."

I do not know if this last profound argument impressed the proprietor very deeply, but at any rate he became milder and milder. "Well, as it grows late, and there are difficulties—" he said. "But ah ! what a villainous beast !" he added pathetically, pointing at the bear, who was making signals of internal distress to the fair Hélène.

"But if we reserved our kind actions for the benefit of the good and beautiful only, what should we be ?" said the Beautiful Lady.

The proprietor struck a magnificent attitude and bowed towards her.

"That is what I have done myself, mademoiselle," he said. "For this night the second garage is at your disposal." And a few minutes later I was towing the unwilling bear towards the second garage. So easy are the triumphs of Beautiful Ladies !

II

The new home of the bear was nothing more glorious than a large stable with a concrete floor. After he had attempted to consume a pool of petrol and been

thwarted, rather timidly, by me, he ceased to take any interest in his surroundings, but sat in a corner staring mournfully at a whitewashed wall. His expression of roguish good-humour had vanished ; he looked bored and weary, and all the blandishments of the Beautiful Lady and the fair Hélène failed to arouse him from his torpor. The former decided that he was hungry ; the latter was of the opinion that he was about to go to sleep for three months—a restful custom which, she informed us, was invariably followed by bears whenever they found themselves in a place of safety. I hoped that it might be so, but was dubious. The fair Hélène was always shaky on facts. One thing at least was obvious, the bear must be fed, and I went out into the square to find out from the Basque the particular form of food that suited the animal. But the Basque had vanished ; no doubt he was celebrating an unparalleled occasion in his favourite *cabaret*. The greater part of the crowd had vanished also, but there were still a few people in the square, and when they saw me they made facetious remarks to each other in their own dialect. I felt hot about the ears, and returned to confer with the Beautiful Lady.

I had imagined that a Russian would be thoroughly posted in the details of a bear's private life, but I was disappointed. After much discussion, however, we were able to draw up a kind of menu, founded partly on our own observations and partly on literary authorities. I give it with notes of the sources of information.

A bear can eat—

- (1) Sons of prophets (and so, presumably, all men who are not too old. Holy Writ is the authority for this item).
- (2) Buns. (We had seen bears do it in the Zoological Gardens.)
- (3) Old and faithful retainers. (*V. Shakespeare's Winter's Tale.*)

- (4) Sugar. (We saw him do it.)
- (5) Peppermint drops. (Hélène had once offered him some, and he ate them with symptoms of pleasure.)
- (6) Naughty children. (This item was derived from vague recollections of romances read in early youth.)
- (7) Bread and cream. (Hélène, but authority suspected.)
- (8) Honey. (Proverbs, Romances, and Natural History.)
- (9) Men in uniform. (? Observations not yet complete.)

It was, on paper, quite a substantial menu, but actually several of the items were almost unobtainable. Sons of prophets seemed to be extinct, old and faithful retainers were scarce and probably expensive, and though the town doubtless abounded in naughty children (among whom the pomaded boy was chiefly indicated, in spite of the meagreness of his shanks, as an *hors d'œuvre* for the bear) we had to remember that the birth-rate in France was on the decline. Eventually I went with Hélène to the kitchen and returned with a portion of raw beefsteak, a bowl of bread and milk, and, as honey in the comb was not procurable, a pot of dark-brown stickiness which was erroneously described on its label as the produce of bees. We set these offerings on the ground near the bear and watched him with the rapt anxiety of augurs who expect an omen.

My wild assertion that he was a vegetarian turned out to be correct. The bear sniffed the beefsteak, and then turned away sadly and was making for his corner, when he saw the so-called honey. Next moment he was trying to swallow it, pot and all, and I remember that during the struggle which ensued I contemplated with some misgiving the chances of his hugging me. But he was really the best-tempered animal that ever

wore fur, and allowed me to take the pot from him with no protest fiercer than a broken-hearted groan. I poured the honey on the floor, and he consumed it instantly ; the bread and milk followed it in another moment, and then it was manifest that he was still hungry. He uttered more groans, and stood upon his hind legs, bowing grotesquely towards us. Afterwards he danced a few steps and performed his fat-lady act once more. I think it was then that we all began really to love him. But he was obviously unhappy, and I was afraid that in spite of his refusal of the beefsteak he was secretly pining for a man in uniform. The Beautiful Lady became sad whilst she watched him. "It is so little and he is so large," she murmured tragically ; "he will waste away. It is terrible." I tried feverishly to remember what other vegetables were usually associated with bears, but could think of nothing. A bear devouring a cabbage seemed a fantastic idea ; carrots did not sound quite so unsuitable, but yet— The Beautiful Lady could only suggest grapes, but at that season of the year there was no grape in the length and breadth of Provence.

Suddenly we were rescued from this appalling situation. The cook, a stout and swarthy personage who shaved once a week but was otherwise charming, had come to the door of the garage and was watching with a cynical eye our attempts to satisfy the bear's hunger. Presently, without saying a word, he left us, but returned a few minutes later with a huge pail which contained a fearsome *galimatis* of all kinds of garden produce swimming in grease. He presented it to the bear, who plunged his head into the pail with a snort of intense satisfaction and finished the whole mess without pausing to take breath, like a schoolman at Oxford who floors a sconce. The cook, who was a person of humour, placed his hand on his heart and made the bear a profound bow ; the bear rose on

his hind legs, returned the bow, and then sat down and regarded us with the utmost benevolence. He seemed to be really sorry when we went, and uttered little protesting moans. "Isn't he a dear!" said the Beautiful Lady. I was so greatly relieved by the solution of the two problems of housing and food that I agreed rapturously; but, like the person in the poem, I sighed when I thought of the morrow.

I did not have to wait even until the morrow for new developments. Being overwrought with the excitements of the day, I went to bed early and was asleep before midnight. Exactly at half-past that witching hour I was awakened by what seemed to my startled ear a conflict of giants, followed a moment later by the rattle of flying feet, the clash of the tocsin, and the groans of the stricken. I sprang from bed and rushed to my window, which overlooked the stable-yard. By the light of the moon I saw the figure of a man, apparently in military uniform, who was tugging frenziedly at the cord of the bell which hung at the entrance to the yard, and shouting as if all the infernal hounds were unleashed and hard on his track. As soon as he saw me, without ceasing to jerk the bell-rope, he made frantic signs towards the door with his free hand. Meanwhile, the awful groaning grew louder, mingled with a noise not unlike that of calico torn suddenly.

I descended the stairs with a heart full of the most dismal foreboding. Half-way down I met the proprietor, who looked daggers at me; his suspicions evidently coincided with my own. We were followed by various other members of the staff, including Hélène, who even in that awful moment had not forgotten her false front. The proprietor opened the door, and then a terror-stricken but voluble chauffeur burst in upon us, explaining that he had taken the hotel car, which was not expected to return until the next morning, to the second garage, and had there

been severely assaulted by a tiger. He had managed to escape after a terrible struggle, and the tiger was now in the act of devouring the car. Without pausing to examine the alleged wounds of the chauffeur, the proprietor seized a lantern and made for the garage, closely followed by the owner of the bear and the male members of the staff. We found the bear reclining against the back of the car in an attitude of repletion ; he had contrived to devour a considerable portion of a front tyre and had smashed the glass screen. But he was quite good-tempered and quite unashamed, and as soon as he recognized me he arose and bowed. I made no acknowledgment of his politeness, and, feeling that my presence was superfluous and my costume irregular, I returned at once to bed. The last sound that I heard before I sank into haunted slumber was the voice of the chauffeur demanding compensation for his shattered nerves. Thus ended the first day of my existence as a bear-fancier.

III

I will not dwell on the scene that took place next morning, when the cost of torn tyres and nerve-shattered chauffeurs was reckoned up by the proprietor and duly enshrined in writing by the fair Hélène. In justice to the bear, I must add that his personal charm during the next few days became so entralling that I forgave him even this expensive escapade, and, if I had been rich, I would have willingly provided him with a fresh motor-tyre for breakfast every morning as long as his life lasted. He was the most docile of all four-footed monsters ; his perfect manners were no false and superficial veneer, but the sincere and spontaneous expression of a gentle soul ; he began very soon to regard even men in

uniform with affability, and I refuse to believe that he would ever have had the heart to plunder a beehive. Every one in the hotel except the proprietor and the mangled chauffeur became devoted to him ; even the Beautiful Lady's maid, a highly nervous Parisian with a waist like a wasp, was detected in the act of going alone to present him with some smuggled delicacy. He contrived to upset entirely all one's preconceived ideas of the nature of bears ; he was never surly, and if he ever hugged any one in the course of his life I am absolutely sure that the embrace was a result of the most whole-hearted affection.

The proprietor, as I have said, remained cold, but though he grumbled because the second garage was occupied, he did not insist that its inmate should find new quarters. I believe that very soon he became secretly gratified by the interest which the inhabitants of the town and various distinguished strangers displayed towards his queer guest, and when the great man of the district (who was actually a poet : Provence is a marvellous country !) requested an interview with the animal, he even condescended to act as showman, and took to himself all the credit for the bear's vastly improved condition. The great man seemed of the opinion that the bear had been foolish in exchanging a vagabond career for the bourgeois fleshpots of hotel life, and wrote a little poem, in Provençal, to that effect. The manuscript, I believe, still hangs in the dining-room. Meanwhile, my influence over the animal waxed wonderfully ; he would come when I called, and used to follow me about the yard, greatly to the joy of sundry small boys who were perpetually squinting through the chinks of the big door. He was so tame that sometimes I did not trouble to lock the door—a sin of omission which eventually resulted in disaster. The Beautiful Lady would frequently descend from

her bower and join these promenades, and whenever she did so the idea that I could possibly have refrained from buying the bear seemed ridiculous and wicked.

So, for a week, all was joy : the bear's wounds became healed, he grew in grace and consumed great quantities of the cook's savoury mess, and the Beautiful Lady postponed her departure in order to enjoy the pleasures of his society. One morning, however, a cloud came over these fair skies : he refused to eat or to walk, and sat gazing at the wall of his home with a heartrending air of severe boredom. He persisted in this melancholy attitude for the whole day, and then we held a consultation. The fair Hélène, always romantic, was of the opinion that the poor beast was pining for a female companion, and earnestly exhorted me to procure one. "Imagine," she said, "all the dear little infants." But the Beautiful Lady and I agreed that the sufferer was in need of exercise and the amusement that follows a change of scene. "He is used to walking and meeting many people," said the Beautiful Lady. "You must take him for a little excursion." I quite appreciated her remark that a walk through the town with a bear would be a novel experience, and would make me even more famous (there had been already several delicious descriptions in the local papers of my scene with the Basque) ; but I am by nature shy and self-effacing, and I must own that when she suggested the promenade I thought of the cook, who was very fond of Toto and obviously in some need of exercise. . . . The cook, when I approached him privily, said with rapture that he would undertake the affair ; but just when I was rejoicing at having obtained so ready an assent, his brow clouded, he smacked his thigh loudly, and exclaimed that the expedition was one which his wife would never permit. She would imagine that he was cutting a ridiculous figure in the eyes of his

fellow-citizens. The end of it was that I had to take Toto myself.

He allowed himself to be muzzled and chained without uttering a protest, but it was apparent that he did not share our theory as to the need of healthy exercise. I managed to urge him as far as the middle of the square, and there he most conclusively and conspicuously sat down. In vain I tugged at his chain and addressed him alternately with withering malediction and melting endearment ; he refused to move. Precisely at this delicious moment a party of lynx-eyed tourists from my own, my native land, invaded the square in two wagonettes. I carefully refrained from seeing them ; but the Beautiful Lady (who was engaged in prodding Toto with her parasol) and my English shooting-coat were far too vivid features in the foreground. The wagonettes halted close to me, and a voluble quacking arose from their occupants. Without any hesitation, the Beautiful Lady walked majestically towards the tourists and invited them to come to my assistance, but before they could recover breath to answer I had raised Toto to his legs, and dragged him with convulsive pushing and hauling down a small side street, where most of the innocent youth and pride of the town were engaged in playing some game of chance in the gutter. Toto moaned piteously, and the youth and pride aforesaid ran as I can never hope to see children run again. In five seconds the street was empty ; in ten seconds every window framed the eloquent countenance of a highly excited mother. I took off my hat at least fifty times in the most rapid possible succession, and when Toto sat down I was able at last to find charity in my soul for the Basque and his steel spike. I looked round for the Beautiful Lady. She was not in sight ; possibly she was still explaining matters to the tourists. In the immortal words of the young hero of melodrama, I had to see this thing through Alone.

We emerged at last from that haunted street on to the river bank, which was full in the sun and, as I expected, deserted at that hour of the morning. Here, as sitting down would have caused me no annoyance, the malicious Toto mended his pace, and towed me in a manner which gave me my first knowledge of the amount of strength which he really possessed. Our progress, though undignified, was uneventful, until we met a mule drawing a cart which contained a sleeping peasant. The mule, on perceiving Toto, uttered a loud snort of surprise and rose in the air like Pegasus ; the peasant, equally promptly, descended with a thud to his native soil. I dropped Toto's chain and made for the mule's head ; Toto shambled off down the riverside and the mule attempted to bite me, but became quiet as soon as the bear withdrew from his vicinity. The peasant was quite uninjured and still only half-awake : I informed him that his mule had shied at my little pet dog, pressed a two-franc piece into his hand, and set off to capture Toto, who had disappeared in a small clump of bushes on the edge of the river.

By this time I was excessively hot, and I resolved that as soon as I had retrieved the animal from his bosky lair I would return at once to the hotel. The grove of bushes, though small, was thickly planted, and though I could hear Toto snorting and groaning within it, I could not locate him accurately until I had gone down on my hands and knees and thrust my head through the lower branches, when I was able to see him sitting in his fat-lady attitude and swaying pensively to and fro. I called him, but he was obviously well contented with his leafy bower, and pretended not to hear me. This pleasant pastime continued for some minutes, during which I became hotter, I suppose, than any one in this world ever was before, and at last I lost my temper and used violent language. Toto instantly began to sink into blissful

slumber. I was on the point of wriggling through the bushes and dragging him out by force when a peremptory voice from the road, which was immediately above us, caused me to emerge partially from my ambush and look up.

I saw then that a somewhat corpulent personage in the uniform of a gendarme was standing on the edge of the road. My attitude at the moment was sufficiently bizarre, but the expression on the face of the personage betrayed neither suspicion nor amusement ; it was perfectly passive, but intimated, in some way, that he was quite prepared to deal successfully with any emergency that might arise. He seemed to have sprouted magically from the earth, and I was so greatly astonished by his sudden appearance that I remained on my hands and knees and stared at him blankly.

" Monsieur has without doubt lost something ? " he inquired after a moment.

I rose to my feet slowly, trying to think of some expedient which would induce him to depart. It was highly probable that he was already aware of a mad foreigner who kept a bear in the hotel, and if he discovered that the mad foreigner had lost control of the animal on a public thoroughfare there would be trouble. Possibly he had been put on my track by the infuriated mothers of the town. I was so hot and irritated, however, that I resolved to stake everything on one desperate lie, and to trust that some kind fate would lead the gendarme out of sight before Toto took it into his head to move.

" A thousand thanks," I said, raising my hat, " but I have lost nothing. I am a botanist, and these bushes have a peculiar interest for botanists."

" Ah ! a botanist ? I demand pardon," he said politely. I was certain then that he had no suspicion of Toto's presence, but I was not nearly so certain that he had accepted my explanation. There

was doubt in his eye ; he walked away for a few steps and then returned.

" I thought that I heard monsieur uttering cries," he said.

I smiled at him confidentially. " Not cries," I said, " but exclamations of discomfort. It is regrettable that you should have heard them, but it is very hot and the branches struck me in the face."

My solitary accomplishment is that of speaking fluent French, and I said the above sentences so glibly, and with such an intensely natural intonation, that I believe the gendarme really for a moment believed my botanical lie. He saluted and seemed about to retire, when from the grove of trees there arose a loud and melancholy series of groans, followed by the sound of twigs that broke beneath the impact of a heavy body. Before I had time even to revile my evil star Toto came rolling through the leafage, stood blinking in the sunlight for a moment, and then sat down contentedly beside me. The gendarme did not utter a sound of surprise, but he regarded the affecting scene below him with an offended eye.

" So this," he said, " is one of monsieur's botanical specimens. I have already heard of monsieur."

I threw up my hands. " Well, the truth is out," I said ; " the fact is that when I first saw you, monsieur, I imagined that you would wish to incarcerate my bear, who escaped for a moment whilst I was arresting a runaway mule. But now that we have conversed together I know that you are not a man of that type. You see for yourself that the bear is muzzled and that he is the gentlest of all beasts." And I made Toto lay his head on my knees whilst I stroked his ears. The gendarme was visibly interested and came nearer.

" He is certainly tame," he murmured, and I assured him that he could pat the animal. He stooped to do so, but alas ! at that moment Toto's

old dislike of uniforms was born anew. He rose on all fours, made a resentful plunge, and became hopelessly involved amid the legs of the gendarme. Next moment that personage had fallen heavily and Toto was shuffling away along the road. When I had caught him the gendarme had picked himself up, and having brushed the dust from his clothes marched towards us with immense dignity.

" You will hear more of this," he said curtly. " The animal is dangerous. I command you to take him home instantly." He glared at me for a moment and then departed along the road. Toto and I trailed sorrowfully homeward amid the applause of the populace, and for the rest of the day I was haunted by the fear of fine or imprisonment. But the only result of the episode was that I received a note from the Chief of Police informing me that Toto would not be permitted to parade in the streets. The Beautiful Lady was highly indignant, and wanted to answer the letter, but I managed to dissuade her from this rash and futile course.

IV

That dismal promenade, which was the greatest mental strain that I have ever been called upon to endure, seemed to have done wonders for Toto. He recovered his appetite and his affability, and wore a perpetual expression of such good humour that even Hélène became convinced that he no longer suffered from the pangs of celibacy. But though our affection for him increased every day, a bitter foreboding began to poison the cup of pleasure. The brother of the Beautiful Lady was anxious to return to Paris, and I had already missed several engagements in London. The question of Toto's future became a haunting obsession. If only I had been the proud possessor of

an ancestral estate, as the Beautiful Lady had imagined, the problem would have been easily solved, but at that time I inhabited a small set of chambers on the fourth floor in the Temple, and I was quite convinced that the legal atmosphere of those antique groves would be very bad for a bear, and doubted the tolerance of the Benchers. I wrote to all my acquaintances who possessed ancestral estates, and they sent me charming letters in return, promising to find some friend with a passion for bears ; but they all shied badly at the animal. One bold spirit, indeed, volunteered to adopt Toto ; but as he seemed to think that the poor brute could exist comfortably in a small hen-coop I declined the offer with thanks. For the same reason I was reluctant to apply to the authorities of the Jardin des Plantes in Paris or the Zoological Gardens in London ; the idea of Toto as a public spectacle in a cage and growing daily more bilious with buns was intolerable. It was bad enough to have to part with him at all, but at any rate I would arrange for his declining years to be spent in comfort.

At length the Beautiful Lady and her brother departed, after a heartrending scene of farewell in the second garage. She promised to find a home for the bear as soon as she reached Paris—promised, too, to write incessantly demanding news of him. She sent some sweets from a shop in the Avenue de l'Opéra which made Toto very sick, but I never heard from her again. *Sunt lacrimae rerum.* Day after day passed, but still no beneficent foster-parent glowed like a sun on the horizon, and at last I became desperate, and began seriously to contemplate the prospect of becoming a naturalized citizen of Provence, and of passing the remainder of my days in rustic seclusion with Toto. But fate and the French Government conspired to prevent this sequel.

It befell that, about a week after the departure of

the Beautiful Lady, a Saint's Day was celebrated in the town and was the occasion for a large influx of peasantry from the surrounding villages which knew not Toto. Shortly before sunset the peasants had assembled in the market-place, and were presumably engaged in drinking to the spiritual health of the saint ere they departed for their homes. It was the hour of Toto's evening walk in the yard ; unmuzzled, he was roaming thoughtfully to and fro, rubbing himself as he went against the walls, whilst I sat on an inverted bucket and contemplated him with melancholy pride. The yard door, which gave egress to the square, was shut. Beyond it I could hear the loud hum of gossip which rose from the assembled villagers.

Suddenly the door of the yard was partially opened and a man's face appeared in the aperture. Probably because it was excessively dirty I recognized the Basque at once. He stood for a moment watching the bear and grinning unpleasantly, and as it occurred to me that he wanted to see his old companion once more and to apologize for his own former behaviour, I called to him to come in. He looked at me, still grinning, and shook his head ; then, putting his fingers to his lips, he gave a long shrill whistle. Toto, who had not observed his old tormentor, jumped round as if a hornet had stung him, stared for a moment at the Basque, and then made for the door at a pace for which I should never have given him credit. When, however, he reached the place where the Basque was standing, I suppose that some memory of the iron spike must have revived in his besotted skull, for he bolted past the ruffian, squeezed through the half-opened door, and vanished from my sight. Ten seconds later I heard a vigorous and combined yell of astonishment ascend from the market-place, and I reached the door in time to witness a very smart stampede of men, women, children, horses, dogs, cats,

and mules, combined with an instantaneous collapse of sweetstalls, crayfish-and-snail stalls, a newspaper kiosk, and most of the tables and chairs in the café. I was rewarded also with the agreeable spectacle of several honourable and bulky citizens in the act of climbing trees, and of others, not less bulky and honourable, who precipitated themselves over the railings that protected the statue in trousers. Meanwhile Toto, proceeding at a lively gallop, twice completed the circuit of the market-place, and gave vent, for the first time since I had known him, to a most blood-curdling sequence of roars. The sight of the Basque had evidently shaken up his nervous system very seriously. After these engaging evolutions he sat down (*à la F.L.*), and allowed me to approach and to capture him. I imprisoned him in the garage and returned to the market-place, and then bulky and honourable citizens crawled painfully down trees and over railings, and said things to me which it is not fitting to reproduce.

I had a dismal suspicion that this was the End of All, and I was right. Early next morning I received a polite but highly formal document which entreated me to step round and interview the Chief of Police. It was brought to me by my old friend the gendarme, who listened to my somewhat sickly jests with a non-committal air, and marched heavily behind me when I went to visit his superior. The Chief of Police, a handsome gentleman with a grey moustache, was polite but firm. The animal, he said, had become a source of public danger, and must be removed from the town. When I explained that an order for Toto's removal was tantamount to banishing his owner, the Chief of Police offered me his regrets, but was quite inexorable. Toto had either to go or to be executed as an enemy of mankind. If the latter horrible event happened, said the Chief of Police, I might apply to the Government for compensation. But he

did not look as if he thought that I should obtain it. He gave me two days in which to make my plans, and promised that he would use his influence to make things easy for me. Only the bear must go. The inhabitants of the town had begun to insist. He had heard all the history of Toto, and when once his ultimatum had been pronounced, was extremely courteous and sympathetic, and actually concluded the interview by asking me to lunch. I accepted, and found that his wife was as charming as himself, and that he had two adorable little girls who were wildly eager to adopt the bear. Next morning he wrote to me saying that if I wished to convey Toto to Paris he could arrange with the railway company for a kind of horse-box to be placed at my disposal. I gladly took advantage of this kindness, for my celebrity in the town had by this time become extremely embarrassing. In a directory I discovered the address of a keeper of live-stock who lived in Paris, and I telegraphed, asking if he was prepared to meet Toto at the Gare de Lyon and to support him in luxury for a week. To my surprise and relief he answered in the affirmative.

Over the harrowing scene of departure I prefer to draw a discreet veil. Suffice it to say that the fair Hélène wept, that the maids wept, that the cook was deeply moved, and that even the proprietor had his emotions. The journey passed without incident, probably because Toto had been drugged with innumerable delicacies before starting. I went to inspect him through a grill in the door whenever the train stopped at a station, and on each occasion I found him plunged in profound stupor. He created a small sensation when he reached the Gare de Lyon, but he was still torpid, and very soon we were discovered by the keeper of live-stock, who drove us away in a malodorous van. I found that he was able to give the bear comfortable quarters, and, after

bidding Toto good-night, I drove to my hotel. Toto displayed no emotion at my departure.

My luck, or Toto's, held good, for next morning I found a letter which promised an admirable future for him. An Englishwoman who possessed a large country house near Besançon had heard from a friend of my difficulty, and wrote to offer a home for him that was to be either temporary or permanent, according to my wishes. I had heard of her as an enthusiastic Female Suffragist, and for a moment I was visited by fears that she would make Toto walk in processions as a specimen of the Effete Male or the Typical Brute of a Husband. But she sent her own husband (who was certainly not a brute) to meet Toto, and he fell an easy victim to the charms of the bear. Toto now fattens slowly in a luxurious domestic atmosphere, far from his Pyrenean home, and far from the ancient town where he emerged for a fortnight into the glare of fame.

Our parting scene was brief, and we set an iron restraint on our emotions ; it was said, however, that he pined for me for a while, and until I lost him I never realized how strong a fascination he possessed. Some day, I hope, I shall see him ; perhaps, if I live and do well and become the owner of a park that is not ancestral, I may comfort his declining years. But the mists of the future are heavy, and who shall reckon on the constancy of bears ? The subject is omitted in all bestiaries. One thing only I know, that if the company of this species of animal is expensive, sensational, and teeming with anxious moments, his absence is the cause of boredom, yearning, and vain regret. With which moral I drop my theorbo.

THE PROMOTION OF THE ADMIRAL

(MORLEY ROBERTS)

MR. SMITH, who ran a sailors' boarding-house in that part of San Francisco known as the Barbary Coast, was absolutely *sui generis*. If any drunken scallawag of a scholar, who had drifted ashore on his boarding-house mud-flats, had ventured in a moment of alcoholic reminiscence to say so in the classic tongue, Shanghai Smith would have "laid him out cold" with anything handy, from a stoneware matchbox to an empty bottle. But if that same son of culture had used his mother tongue, as altered for popular use in the West, and had murmured: "Jerusalem, but Mr. Smith's the daisy of all!" Smith would have thrown out his chest and blown through his teeth a windy oath and guessed he was just so.

"Say it and mean it, that's me," said Smith. "I'm all right. But call me hog and I *am* hog; don't you forget it!"

Apparently all the world called him "hog." For that he was no better than one, whether he walked, or ate, or drank, or slept, was obvious to any sailor with an open eye. But he was hard and rough and tough, and had the bull-headed courage of a mad steer, combined with the wicked cunning of a monkey.

"Don't never play upon me," he said often. "For 'get even' is my motter. There ain't many walkin' this earth that can say they bested me, not from the time I left Bristol in the old *Dart* till now, when I'm known the wide world over."

So far as ships and sailors were concerned he certainly spoke the truth. He was talked of with curses in the Pacific from the Prybiloffs to the Horn, from San Francisco to Zanzibar. It was long odds at any given time in any longitude that some seaman was engaged in blaspheming Shanghai Smith for sending him on board drunk and without a chest, and with nothing better to propitiate his new shipmates with than a bottle of vinegar and water that looked like rum till it was tasted. Every breeze that blew, trade wind or monsoon, had heard of his iniquities. He got the best of every one.

"All but one," said Smith in a moment of weakness, when a dozen men, who owed so much money that they crawled to him as a Chinaman does to a joss, were hanging upon his lips—"all but one."

"Oh, we don't take that in," said one of the most indebted; "we can 'ardly believe that, Mr. Smith."

Sometimes this unsubtle flattery would have ended in the flatterer being thrown out. But Smith was now gently reminiscent.

"Yes, I was done brown and never got the best of one swine," said the boarding-house keeper. "I don't ask you to believe it, for I own it don't sound likely, me being what I am. But there was one swab as give me a hidin', and he give it me good, so he did."

He looked them over malignantly.

"I kin lick any of you here with one hand," he swore, "but the man as bested me could have taken on three of you with both hands. And I own I was took aback considerable when I run against him on the pier at Sandridge when I was in Australia fifteen years ago. He was a naval officer, captain of the *Warrior*, and dressed up to kill, though he had a face like a figurehead cut out of mahog'ny with a broad-axe. And I was feelin' good and in need of a scrap. So when he bumped agin me, I shoved him over—prompt, I shoved him. Down he went, and the girls

that know'd me laughed. And two policemen came along quick. I didn't care much, but this naval josser picks himself up and goes to 'em. Would you believe it, but when he'd spoke a bit I see'd him donate them about a dollar each and they walked off round a heap of dunnage on the wharf, and the captain buttoned up his coat and came for me. I never seen the likes of it. He comes up dancin' and smilin', and he kind of give me half a bow, polite as you like, and inside of ten seconds I knew I'd struck a cyclone, right in the spot where they breed. I fought good—(you know me)—and I got in half a dozen on his face. But I never fazed him none, and he wouldn't bruise mor'n hittin' a boiler. And every time he got back on me I felt as if I'd been kicked. He scarred me something cruel. I could see it by the blood on his hands. 'Twarn't his, by a long sight, for his fists was made of teak, I should say. And in the end, when I seemed to see a ship's company of naval officers around me, one of them hit me under the ear and lifted me up. And another hit me whilst I was in the air, and a third landed me as I fell. And that was the end of it, so far's I remember. When I came to, which was next day in a kind of sailors' hospital, I reached up for a card over my head, and I read 'concussion of the brain' on it. What's more, I believed it. If the card had let on that I'd been run over by a traction engine and picked up dead, I'd have believed it. And when I reely came to my senses, a med'cal student says as Captain Richard Dunn, of the *Warrior*, had bin to inquire when the funeral was, so's he could send a wreath. They said he was the topside fighter in the hull British Navy. And I'm here to say he was."

He breathed fierce defiance, and invited any man alive to tell him he was lying.

"And you never got even?" asked the bar-tender, seeing that no one took up the challenge.

"Never set eyes on him from that day to this," said his boss regretfully.

"And if you did?"

Smith paused, took a drink.

"So help me, I'd shanghai him if he was King of England!"

And one of the crowd, who had put down the *San Francisco Chronicle* in order to hear this yarn, picked it up again.

"S'elp me," he said, in a breathless excitement, "'ere's a bally cohincidence. 'Ere's a telegram from 'Squimault, saying as how the flagship *Triumphant*, Hadmiral Sir Richard Dunn, K.C.B., is comin' down to San Francisco!"

"Holy Moses, let's look!" said Shanghai Smith.

He read, and a heavenly smile overspread his hard countenance. He almost looked good, such joy was his.

"Tom," he said to his bar-tender, "set up the drinks for the crowd. This is my man, for sure. And him an admiral, too! Holy sailor, ain't this luck?"

He went out into the street and walked to and fro rubbing his hands, while the men inside took their drink, and looked through the uncleaned windows at the boss.

"Holy Mackinaw," said Billy, who had drifted West from Michigan, "I reckon never to hev seen Mr. Smith so pleased since he shipped a crowd in the *Harvester*, and got 'em away that night and shipped 'em in the *Silas K. Jones*."

"He's struck a streak o' luck in his mind," said one of the seamen; "and it's this 'ere hadmiral. Now mark me, mates, I wouldn't be that 'ere hadmiral for the worth of California. Mr. Sir Blooming Hadmiral, K.C.B., et setterer, is going to 'ave a time."

He shook his head over the melancholy fate of a British admiral.

"Rot!" said one of the younger men; "'tain't possible to do nothin' to the likes of an admiral. Now, if 'twas a lieutenant or even a captain, I'm not sayin' as Mr. Smith mightn't do somethin'. But an admiral—"

"You mark me," said the older man, "I'd rather be as green as grass and ship as an able-bodied seaman with Billy Yates of the *Wanderer*, than be in that hadminal's shoes. What do you say, Tom?"

Tom filled himself up a drink and considered.

"Wa'al," he answered after a long pause, "it's my belief that it won't necessary be *all* pie to be an admiral if the boss is half the man he used to be. For you see 'tis quite evident he has a special kind of respect for this admiral, and when Mr. Smith has been done by any one that he respects, he don't ever forget. Why, you know yourselves that if one of you was to do him, he'd forgive you right off after he'd kicked the stuffing out of you."

This clear proof that Mr. Smith did not respect them and was kind was received without a murmur. And as the boss did not return, the tide of conversation drifted in the narrower, more personal, channels of the marvels that had happened in the "last ship." And in the meantime H.M.S. *Triumphant*, known familiarly on the Pacific coast station as "the *Non-such*, two decks and no bottom," was bringing Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Dunn, K.C.B., to his fate in San Francisco.

"Was there ever such luck—was there ever such luck?" murmured Mr. Shanghai Smith. "To think of him turnin' up, all of his own accord, on my partic'lar stampin' ground! And I'll lay odds he's clean forgot me. I'll brighten up his mem'ry with sand and canvas and souji-mouji, so I will! Holy sailor, was there ever such luck?"

The morning of the following day H.M.S. *Triumphant* lay at her anchors off Saucelito in San Francisco

Bay, and was glad to be there. For this was in the times when the whole British fleet was not absolutely according to Cocker. She leaked not a little and she rolled a great deal, and she would not mind her helm except upon those occasions when the officer in charge of the deck laid his money and his reputation on her going to starboard when, according to all rules, she should have altered her course to port. But though she was a wet ship with a playful habit of trying to scoop the Pacific Ocean dry, and though her tricks would have broken the heart of the Chief Naval Constructor had he seen her at them, she was the flagship in spite of her conduct, because at that time she was half the whole Pacific Squadron. The other half was lying outside Esquimault Dry Dock waiting for it to be finished. And when the *Chronicle* said that "Dicky Dunn" was the admiral, it had not lied. If any of that paper's reporters had known "Dicky" as his men knew him, he would have spread himself in a column on the admiral's character and personal appearance.

"He's the dead-spit of a bo'son's mate, to be sure," said the crew of the *Triumphant* when they received him at Esquimault. "An 'ard nut he looks!"

And a "hard nut" he certainly was. Though he stood five feet nine in height, he looked two inches less, for he was as broad as a door and as sturdy as the fore-bitts. His complexion was the colour of the sun when it sets in a fog for fine weather: the skin on his hands shone and was as scaly as a lizard's hide. His teeth were white and his eyes piercing. He could roar like a fog-horn, and sing, as the crew said, "like any hangel." There wasn't the match of "Dicky" on any of the seas the wide world over. The only trouble was that he looked so much like the traditional sailor and buccaneer that no one could believe he was anything higher than a warrant officer at the most when he had none of his official gear about him.

Though the admiral did not know it, one of the very first to greet him when he set his foot on dry land at the bottom of Market Street was the man he had licked so thoroughly fifteen years before in Melbourne.

"Oh, it's the same," said Smith to his chief runner, who was about the "hardest case" in California. "He ain't changed none. Just so old he was when he set about me. Why, the galoot might be immortal. Mark him, now; will you know him anywhere?"

"It don't pay me ever to forget," replied the runner. He had to remember the men who owed him grudges.

"Then don't forget this one," said Smith. "Do you find me a considerate boss?"

"Oh, well—" said the runner ungraciously.

"You've got to do a job for me, Billy."

"And what?"

"I'm goin' to have this hyer admiral shipped before the stick on the toughest ship that's about ready to go to sea," replied Smith.

Billy flinched.

"Sir, it's the penitentiary!"

"I don't care if it's lynchin'," said Smith. "Help—or get. I'm bossin' this job. Which is it?"

And Billy, seeing that he was to play second fiddle, concluded to help.

"And," he said to himself, "if we get nailed I'll split. Calls himself a 'considerate boss.' Well, Shanghai Smith *has* a gall!"

"Which do you reckon is the worst ship inside the Gate now?" asked Smith, after he had savoured his cunning revenge for a few minutes.

"The *Harvester* ain't due for a month, sir."

Smith looked melancholy.

"No, she ain't, that's a fact. It's a solid pity. Sant would have suited this Dunn first class." He was the most notorious blackguard of a shipmaster

yet unhung, and the fact that Smith and he were bitter enemies never blinded Shanghai to the surpassing merits of his brutality.

"There's the *Cyrus G. Hake*."

Smith shook his head contemptuously.

"D'ye think I want to board this admiral at the Palace Hotel? Why, Johnson hasn't hurt a man serious for two trips."

"Oh, well, I thought as he'd sure break out soon," said Bill; "but there's the *President*. They do say that her new mate is a holy terror."

"I won't go on hearsay," said Smith decidedly. "I want a good man you and I know—one that'll handle this Dicky Dunn from the start. Now, what's in the harbour with officers that can lick me?"

"Well, I always allowed (as you know, Mr. Smith) that Simpson of the *California* was your match."

Smith's face softened.

"Well, mebbe he is."

At any other time he would never have admitted it.

"And the *California* will sail in three days."

"Right-o," said Smith. "Simpson is a good tough man and so is old Blaker. Bill, the *California* will do. But it's an almighty pity the *Harvester* ain't here. I never knew a more unlucky thing. But we must put up with the next best."

"But how 'll you corral the admiral, sir?" asked Bill.

"You leave that to me," replied his boss. "I've got a very fruitful notion as will fetch him if he's half the man he was."

Next evening Smith found occasion to run across a couple of the *Triumphant*'s crew, and he got them to come into his house for a drink.

"Are these galoots to be dosed and put away?" asked the bar-tender.

"Certainly not," said Smith. "Fill 'em up with good honest liquor at my expense."

The bar-tender hardly knew where good honest liquor was to be found in that house, but he gave the two men-o'-war's men the slowest poison he had, and they were soon merry.

"Is the admiral as dead keen on fightin' with his fists as he was?" asked Smith.

"Rather," said the first man.

"Oh no, he's tired," said the second. "'E allows e' can't find no one to lick 'im. 'E never could."

"Oh, that's his complaint, is it?" said Smith.
"And is he as good as he was?"

"I heerd him tell the first luff on'y the other day as 'e reckoned to be a better man now than he was twenty years ago. And I believes 'im. 'Ard? Oh my! I do believe if 'e ran agin a lamp-post he'd fight through it."

It was enough for Smith to know that the admiral was still keen on fighting. To draw a man like that would not be so difficult. When he had turned the two naval seamen into the street, he called for the runner.

"Have you found out what I told you?"

"Yes," replied Bill. "He mostly comes down and goes off at eleven."

"Is he alone?"

"Mostly he has a young chap with him. I reckon they calls him the flag-lieutenant; a kind of young partner he seems to be. But that's the only one so far. And the *California* sails day after ter-morrer, bright and early."

"Couldn't be better," said Smith. "After waitin' all these years I can't afford to lose no time. Thishyer racket comes off to-night. Look out, Mr. Bully Admiral! I'm on your track."

And the trouble did begin that night.

Mr. "Say-it-and-mean-it" Smith laid for Admiral Sir Richard Dunn, K.C.B., etc., etc., from ten o'clock till half-past eleven, and he was the only man in the

crowd that did not hope the victim would come down with too many friends to be tackled.

"It's a penitentiary job, so it is," said Bill. And yet when the time arrived his natural instincts got the better of him.

The admiral came at last : it was about a quarter to twelve, and the whole water-front was remarkably quiet. The two policemen at the entrance to the Ferries had by some good luck, or better management, found it advisable to take a drink at Johnson's, just opposite. And the admiral was only accompanied by his flag-lieutenant.

"That's him," said Smith. "I'd know the beggar anywhere. Now keep together and sing!"

He broke into "Down on the Suwannee River," and advanced with Bill and Bill's two mates right across the admiral's path. They pretended to be drunk, and as far as three were concerned, there was not so much pretence about it after all. But Smith had no intention of being the first to run athwart the admiral's hawse. When he came close enough, he shoved the youngest man right into his arms. The admiral jumped back, and landed that unfortunate individual a round-arm blow that nearly unshipped his jaw. The next moment every one was on the ground, for Bill sand-bagged the admiral just as he was knocked down by the lieutenant. As Sir Richard fell, he reached out and caught Smith by the ankle. The boarding-house master got the lieutenant by the coat and brought him down too. And as luck would have it, the youngster's head hit the admiral's with such a crack that both lay unconscious.

"Do we want the young 'un too?" asked Bill, when he rose to his feet, swinging his sand-bag savagely. And Smith for once lost his head.

"Leave the swine, and puckarow the admiral," he said. And indeed it was all they could do to carry Sir Richard without exciting any more attention than

four semi-intoxicated men would as they took home a mate who was quite incapacitated.

But they did get him home to the house in the Barbary Coast. When he showed signs of coming to, he was promptly dosed and his clothes were taken off him. As he slept the sleep of the drugged, they put on a complete suit of rough serge toggery, and he became "Tom Deane, A.B."

"They do say that he is the roughest, toughest, hardest nut on earth," said Bill; "so we'll see what like he shapes in the *California*. I dessay he's one of that lot that lets on how sailors have an easy time. It's my notion the *California* will cure him of that."

By four o'clock in the morning, Tom Deane, who was, as his new shipmates allowed, a hard-looking man who could, and would, pull his weight, lay fast asleep in a forward bunk of the *California*'s foc'sle as she was being towed through the Golden Gate. And his flag-lieutenant was inquiring in hospital what had become of the admiral, and nobody could tell him more than he himself knew. So much he told the reporters of the *Chronicle* and the *Morning Call*, and flaring headlines announced the disappearance of a British admiral, and the wires and cables fairly hummed to England and the world generally. At the same time the San Francisco police laid every water-front rat and tough by the heels on the chance that something might be got out of one of them.

"What did I tell you?" asked Bill in great alarm, as he saw several intimate friends of his being escorted to gaol.

"Are you weakenin' on it?" said Smith savagely. "If I thought you was, I'd murder you. Give me away, and when I get out, I'll chase you three times round the world and knife you, my son."

And though Bill was so much of a "terror," he could not face Smith's eyes.

"Well, I ain't in it, anyhow," he swore.

But certainly "Tom Deane, A.B." was in it, and was having a holy time.

When the admiral woke, which he did after half an hour's shaking administered in turns by three of the *California*'s crew, who were anxious to know where he had stowed his bottle of rum, he was still confused with the "dope" given him ashore. So he lay pretty still and said—

"Send Mr. Selwyn to me."

But Selwyn was his flag-lieutenant, and was just then the centre of interest to many reporters.

"Send hell; rouse out, old son, and turn to," said one of his new mates. And the admiral rose and rested on his elbow.

"Where am I?"

"On board the *California*, to be sure."

"I'm dreaming," said the admiral, "that's what it is. To be sure, I'm dreaming."

There was something in his accent as he made this statement that roused curiosity in the others.

"No—you ain't—not much," said the first man who had spoken; "and even if you was, I guess Simpson will wake you. Rouse up before he comes along again. He was in here an hour back inquiring for the trumpet of the Day of Judgment to rouse you. Come along, Deane! Now then!"

"My name's Dunn," said the admiral, with contracted brows.

"Devil doubt it," said his friend; "and who done you? Was it Shanghai Smith?"

The admiral sat up suddenly, and by so doing brought his head into violent contact with the deck above him. This woke him thoroughly, just in time to receive Mr. Simpson, mate of the *California*, who came in like a cyclone to inquire after his health.

"Did you ship as a dead man?" asked Mr. Simpson, "for if you did, I'll undeceive you."

And with that he yanked the admiral from his

bunk, and dragged him by the collar out upon the deck at a run. Mr. Simpson was " bucko " to his finger-tips, and had never been licked upon the high seas. But for that matter Vice-Admiral Sir Richard Dunn, K.C.B., had never hauled down his flag either to any man. It surprised him, as it would have surprised any of his crew, to find that he took this handling almost meekly. But then no one knows what he would do if the sky fell ; and as far as the admiral was concerned, the entire world was an absurd and ridiculous nightmare. He rose at the end of his undignified progress and stared at the mate.

" Who—who are you ? " he said.

Mr. Simpson gasped.

" Who am I—oh, who am I ? Well, I'll oblige you by statin' once for all that I'm mate of this ship, and you're my dog."

But the " dog " shook his head.

" Nothing of the sort," he said, as he staggered with the remains of the opiate. " I'm a British admiral, and my name's Sir Richard Dunn. Where's my ship ? "

Any ordinary kind of back answer or insubordination received only one kind of treatment on board the *California*, and when a man had been beaten to a jelly, he rarely recovered enough spirit to inquire why he had been hammered. But this was a new departure in back talk.

" Oh, you're an admiral—an admiral, heh ? " said Simpson.

" Of course," said Sir Richard, and a sudden gust of rage blew the last opium out of him. " Why, damn it, sir, what the devil do you mean by laying your filthy paws on me ? Where's your captain, sir ? By all that's holy, I'll smash you if you so much as look at me again."

Now it is a remarkable fact that the utterly and entirely unexpected will sometimes shake the courage

of the stoutest heart. It is possible that a tiger would itself turn tail if a lamb rushed at him with open mouth. And though Mr. Simpson would have tackled a prize-fighter, knowing he was a prize-fighter, the fact that one of the kind of men whom he was accustomed to wipe his boots on now turned upon him with entirely strange language and a still stranger air of authority, for a moment daunted him utterly. He stood still and gasped, while the admiral strode aft and went up the poop ladder. He was met there by the captain, who had been the terror of the seas as a mate. A narrow escape of a conviction for murder had partially reformed him. He had also become religious, and usually went below when Simpson or the second "greaser" was hammering any one into oblivion and obedience.

"What is this?" asked Captain Blaker mildly, yet with a savage eye. "Mr. Simpson, what do you mean by allowing your authority (and mine delegated to you) to be disregarded?"

"Sir——" said Mr. Simpson, and then the admiral turned on him.

"Hold your infernal tongue, sir," he roared. "And, sir, if you are the master of this vessel, as I suppose, I require you to put about for San Francisco. I am a British admiral, sir; my name is Sir Richard Dunn."

"Oh, you're an admiral and you 'require'?" said Blaker. "Wa'al, I do admire! You look like an admiral: the water-front is full of such. Take that, sir."

And the resurgent old Adam in Blaker struck the admiral with such unexpected force that Dunn went heels over head off the poop and landed on Simpson. The mate improved the opportunity by kicking him violently in the ribs. When he was tired, he spoke to the admiral again.

"Now, you lunatic, take this here ball of twine

and go and overhaul the gear on the main. And if you open your mouth to say another word I'll murder you."

And though he could not believe he was doing it, Sir Richard Dunn crawled aloft, and did what he was told. He was stunned by his fall and the hammering he had received, but that was nothing to the utter and complete change of air that he experienced. As he overhauled the gear he wondered if he was an admiral at all. If he was, how came he on the maintop-gallant-yard of a merchant ship? If he wasn't, why was he surprised at being there? He tried to recall the last day of his life as an admiral, and was dimly conscious of a late evening somewhere in San Francisco at which he had certainly taken his share of liquor. A vague sense of having been in a row oppressed him, but he could recall nothing till he had been yanked out of his bunk by that truculent devil of a mate then patrolling the poop.

"I—I must be mad," said the admiral.

"Now then, look alive there, you dead crawling cat," said Mr. Simpson, "or I'll come up and boot you off the yard. Do you hear me?"

"Yes, sir," said the admiral quickly, and as he put a new mousing on the clip-hooks of the mizzen-top-mast-staysail-tripping-line block, he murmured: "I suppose I never was an admiral after all. I don't seem to know what I am." And the hardest nut among the admirals of the Active List wiped away a tear with the sleeve of his coat as he listened to the sacred Communion Service with all its blessings, intoned in a down-east twang by the eminent Mr. Simpson.

"He's crazy," said Simpson to the second greaser. "Says he's an admiral. I've had the Apostle Peter on board, and a cook who said he was St. Paul, but this is the first time I've run against an admiral before the mast."

"Does he look like it, sir?" asked Wiggins, laughing.

"He looks the toughest case you ever set eyes on," said Simpson. "But you'd have smiled to see the way the old man slugged him off the poop. And yet there's something about him I don't tumble to. I guess that's where his madness lies. Guess I'll cure him or kill him by the time we get off Sandy Hook.—Now then, you, admiral, come down here and start up the fore rigging, and do it quick, or I'll know the reason why."

And the Knight Commander of the Bath came down as he was bid, and having cast a perplexed eye over Simpson and Wiggins, who sniggered at him with amused and savage contempt, he went forward in a hurry.

"This is a nightmare," he said; "I'm dreaming. Damme, perhaps I'm dead."

When he had overhauled the gear at the fore—and being a real seaman he did it well—Wiggins called him down to work on deck, and he found himself among his new mates. By now they were all aware that he believed he was an admiral, and that he had spoken to Simpson in a way that no man had ever done. That was so much to his credit, but since he was mad he was a fit object of jeers. They jeered him accordingly, and when they were at breakfast the trouble began.

"Say, are you an admiral?" asked Knight, the biggest tough on board except Simpson and Wiggins.

And the admiral did not answer. He looked at Knight with a gloomy, introspective eye.

"Mind your own business," he said, when the question was repeated.

And Knight hove a full pannikin of tea at him. This compliment was received very quietly, and the admiral rose and went on deck.

"Takes water at once," said Knight; "he ain't got the pluck of a mouse."

But the admiral went aft and interviewed Mr. Simpson.

"May I have the honour of speaking to you, sir?" he said, and Simpson gasped a little, but said he might have that honour.

"Well, sir," said Sir Richard Dunn, "I don't know how I got here, but here I am, and I'm willing to waive the question of my being a British admiral, as I can't prove it."

"That's right," said Simpson. "Ah, I'll have you sane enough by-and-by, my man."

The admiral nodded.

"But I wish to have your permission to knock the head off a man called Knight for'ard. It was always my custom, sir, to allow fights on board my own ship when I considered them necessary. But I always insisted on my permission being asked. Have I yours, sir?"

Simpson looked the admiral up and down.

"Your ship, eh? You're still crazy, I'm afraid. But Knight can kill you, my man."

"I'm willing to let him try, sir," said the admiral. "He hove a pannikin of tea over me just now, and I think a thrashing would do him good and conduce to the peace and order of the fo'c'sle."

"Oh, you think so," said Simpson. "Very well, you have my permission to introduce peace there."

"I thank you, sir," said the admiral.

He touched his hat and went forward. He put his head inside the fo'c'sle and addressed Knight—

"Come outside, you bully, and let me knock your head off. Mr. Simpson has been kind enough to overlook the breach of discipline involved."

And Knight, nothing loth, came out on deck, while Simpson and Wiggins stood a little way off to enjoy the battle.

"I'd like to back the admiral," said Wiggins.

"I'll have a level five dollars on Knight," said

Simpson, who remembered that he had, on one occasion, found Knight extremely difficult to reduce to pulp.

"Done with you," said Wiggins.

And in five minutes the second mate was richer by five dollars, as his mates carried Knight into the fo'c'sle.

"I don't know when I enjoyed myself more," said Simpson, with a sigh—"even if I do lose money on it. While it lasted it was real good. Did you see that most be-ewtiful upper cut? And the right-handed cross counter that finished it was jest superb. But I'll hev to speak to the victor, so I will."

And he addressed the admiral in suitable language.

"Don't you think, because you've licked him, that you can fly any flag when I'm around. You done it neat and complete, and I overlook it, but half a look and the fust letter of a word of soss and I'll massacre you myself. Do you savvy?"

And the admiral said—

"Yes, sir."

He touched his cap and went forward to the fo'c'sle to enter into his kingdom. For Knight had been "topside joss" there for three voyages, being the only man who had ever succeeded in getting even one pay-day out of the *California*. The principle on which she was run was to make things so hot for her crew that they skipped out at New York instead of returning to San Francisco, and the fresh crew shipped in New York did the same when they got inside the Golden Gate.

"I understand," said the admiral, as he stood in the middle of the fo'c'sle, "that the gentleman I've just had the pleasure of knocking into the middle of next week was the head bully here. Now I want it thoroughly understood in future that if any bullying is to be done, I'm going to do it."

All the once obedient slaves of the deposed Knight

hastened to make their peace with the new power. They fairly crawled to the admiral.

" You kin fight," said one.

" I knew it jest so soon as you opened yer mouth," said another. " The tone of yervoice argued you could."

" It's my belief that he could knock the stuffin' out o' Mr. Simpson," said the third.

" Twould be the best kind of fun," said another admirer of the powers that be, " for Blaker would kick Simpson in here, and give the admiral his job right off. He's got religion, has Blaker, but he was an old packet rat himself, and real ' bucko ' he was, and believes in the best men bein' aft."

And though the admiral said nothing to this, he remembered it, and took occasion to inquire into its truth. He found that what he knew of the sea and its customs was by no means perfect. He learnt something every day, and not the least from Knight, who proved by no means a bad sort of man when he had once met his match.

" Is it true," asked the admiral, " what they say about Captain Blaker giving any one the mate's job if he can thrash him ? "

" It used to be the custom in the Western Ocean," said Knight, " and Blaker was brought up there. He's a real sport, for all his bein' sort of religious. Yes, I'll bet it's true." He turned to the admiral suddenly. " Say, you wasn't thinking of takin' Simpson on, was you ? "

" If what you say's true, I was," said the admiral. " It don't suit me being here."

" Say now, partner," put in Knight, " what's this guff about your being an admiral ? What put it into your head ? "

And Sir Richard Dunn laughed. As he began to feel his feet, and find that he was as good a man in new surroundings as in the old ones, he recovered his courage and his command of himself.

"After all, this will be the deuce of a joke when it's over," he thought, "and I don't see why I shouldn't get a discharge out of her as mate. Talk about advertisement!"

He knew how much it meant.

"Look here, Knight," he said aloud, "I *am* an admiral. I can't prove it, but my ship was the *Triumphant*. I don't want to force it down your throat, but if you'd say you believe it, I should be obliged to you."

Knight put out his hand.

"I believes it, sonny," he said, "for I own freely that there's suthin' about you different from us; a way of talk, and a look in the eye that ain't familiar in no fo'c'sle as I ever sailed in. And if you was lyin', how come you to lie so ready, bein' so drunk when Simpson hauled you out o' yer bunk? No, I believe you're speakin' the trewth."

And Sir Richard Dunn, K.C.B., shook hands with Charles Knight, A.B.

"I won't forget this," he said huskily. He felt like Mahomet with his first disciple. "And now, in confidence," said the admiral, "I tell you I mean to have Simpson's job by the time we're off the Horn."

"Good for you," cried Knight. "Oh, he kicked me somethin' cruel the time him and me had a turn-up. Give it him, old man. And here's a tip for you. If you get him down, keep him down. Don't forget he kicked you, too."

"I don't forget," said Sir Richard—"I don't forget by any means."

Yet he did his duty like a man. Though many things were strange to him, he tumbled to them rapidly. One of his fads had been doing ornamental work, even when he was an admiral, and he put fresh "pointing" on the poop ladder rails for Blaker in a way that brought every one to look at it. There was no one on board who could come within sight of him

at any fancy work, and this so pleased Simpson that the admiral never had a cross word till they were south of the Horn. Then by chance the mate and the captain had a few words which ended in Simpson getting much the worst of the talk. As luck would have it, the admiral was the handiest to vent his spite on, and Simpson caught him a smack on the side of his head that made him see stars.

"Don't stand listenin' there to what don't concern you, you damned lazy hound," he said. And when the admiral picked himself off the deck, Simpson made a rush for him. The admiral dodged him, and shot up the poop ladder. He took off his cap to the captain, while Simpson foamed on the main deck and called him in vain. At any other time Blaker would have gone for the seaman who dared to escape a thrashing for the moment by desecrating the poop, but now he was willing to annoy Simpson.

"Well, what do you want?" he roared.

The admiral made a really elegant bow.

"Well, sir, I wanted to know whether Western Ocean custom goes here. I've been told that if I can thrash your mate, I shall have his job. They say forward that that's your rule, and if so, sir, I should like your permission to send Mr. Simpson forward and take his place."

There was something so open and ingenuous in the admiral that Captain Blaker, for the first time on record, burst into a shout of laughter. He went to the break of the poop and addressed the mate.

"Do you hear, Mr. Simpson?" he inquired genially.

"Send him down, sir," said Simpson.

"Are you sure you can pound him?"

Simpson gritted his teeth and foamed at the mouth.

"Kick him off the poop, sir."

The admiral spoke anxiously.

"I'm a first-class navigator, sir. Is it a bargain?"

And Blaker, who had never liked Simpson, laughed till he cried.

"Are you willing to stake everything on your fightin' abilities, Mr. Simpson?"

And when Simpson said "Ay" through his teeth, the admiral jumped down on the maindeck.

Now, according to all precedents, the fight should have been long and arduous, with varying fortunes. But the admiral never regarded precedents, and inside of ten seconds Mr. Simpson was lying totally insensible under the spare topmast. To encounter the admiral's right was to escape death by a hair's-breadth, and it took Charles Simpson, Able Seaman (*vice* Mr. Simpson, Chief Officer), two hours and a quarter to come to.

"And I thot he could fight," said the disgusted skipper. "Come right up, Mr. What's-your name; you're the man for me. There ain't no reason for you to trouble about my second mate, for Simpson could lay him out easy. All I ask of you is to work the whole crowd up good. And I don't care if you are an admiral, you are the right sort all the same. I guess that Simpson must have reckoned he struck a cyclone."

And Blaker rubbed his hands. Like Simpson at the fight between the admiral and Knight, he did not know when he had enjoyed himself more. He improved the occasion by going below and getting far too much to drink, as was his custom. And the promoted admiral took charge of the deck.

"Ability tells anywhere," said Sir Richard Dunn. "I didn't rise in the service for nothing. Ship me where you like, and I'll come to the top. If I don't take this hooker into New York as captain and master, I'll die in the attempt."

He had quite come to himself, and was beginning to enjoy himself. His natural and acquired authority blossomed wonderfully when he took on the new job,

and as Blaker never swore, the admiral's gift of language was a great vicarious satisfaction to him. Wiggins accepted the situation without a murmur. Even Simpson himself bore no malice when his supplanter not only showed none, but after knocking the bo'son's head against a bollard, gave his place to the former mate. Though he kept the men working and got the last ounce out of them, none of them were down on him.

"I tell you he's an admiral, sure," they said.

"He's got all the ways of one, I own," said Bill, an old man-o'-war's man. "I spoke to an admiral myself once, or rather he spoke to me."

"What did he say?" asked the rest of his watch.

"He said," replied Bill proudly,—"he upped and said, 'You cross-eyed son of a dog, if you don't jump I'll bash the ugly head off of you.' And you bet I jumped. Oh, he's all the ways of *some* admirals, he has."

"Well, admiral or none," said the rest of the crowd, "things goes on pleasanter than they done when you was mate, Simpson."

And Simpson grunted.

"And he gets more work out of us than you done either, Simpson, for all your hammerin' of us."

"I'll likely be hammerin' some of you again shortly," said Simpson. And as he was cock of the walk in the fo'c'sle, whatever he was in the ship, the others dried up.

Nothing of great interest happened till they were well east of the Horn and hauled up for the northward run. And then Blaker took to religion (or what he called religion) and rum in equally undiluted doses.

"I'm a miserable sinner, I am," he said to the admiral, "but all the same, I'll do my duty to the crowd."

He called them aft and preached to them for two

hours. And when one man yawned, he laid him out with a well-directed belaying pin. The next day, when it breezed up heavily and they were shortening sail, he called all hands down from aloft on the ground that their souls were of more importance than the work in hand.

"Come down on deck, you miserable sinners," said Blaker through a speaking-trumpet. His voice rose triumphantly above the roar of the gale. "Come down on deck and listen to me. For though I'm a miserable sinner too, there's some hopes for me, and for you there's none unless you mend your ways, in accordance with what I'm telling you."

Even with the speaking-trumpet he could hardly make himself heard over the roar of the increasing gale and the thunderous slatting of the topsails in the spilling-lines.

"Don't you think, sir, that they'd better make the topsails fast before you speak to them?" said the admiral.

"No, I don't," replied Blaker—"not much I don't, not by a jugful. For if one of 'em went overboard, I'd be responsible before the throne. And don't you forget it."

"Damme, he's mad," said Sir Richard—"mad as a March hare. She'll be shaking the sticks out of her soon."

He leant over the break of the poop, and called up Wiggins.

"Mr. Wiggins, one word with you."

Wiggins came up, as Blaker roared his text through the trumpet.

"Will you stand by me, Mr. Wiggins, if I knock him down and take command?"

"I will; but mind his gun," said Wiggins. "When he's very bad, he'll shoot."

It was not any fear of Blaker's six-shooter that made the admiral hesitate. To take the command,

even from a madman, at sea is a ticklish task and may land a man in gaol, for all his being a shanghaied admiral.

"I tell you, Mr. Wiggins, that Simpson is a good man. I'll bring him aft again."

And Wiggins made no objection when Simpson was called up by the admiral.

"Mr. Simpson," said the mate, "this is getting past a joke. Have you any objection to taking on your old job if I secure this preaching madman and take command?"

Simpson was "full up" of the fo'c'sle, and as he had a very wholesome admiration for the admiral, he was by no means loth to return to his old quarters.

"I'm with you, sir. In another quarter of an hour we shall have the sticks out of her."

And still Blaker bellowed scripture down the wind. He was still bellowing, though what he bellowed wasn't scripture, when Simpson and Wiggins took him down below after five minutes of a row in which the deposed captain showed something of his ancient form as the terror of the Western Ocean. As they went, the admiral, now promoted to being captain of a Cape Horner, picked up the battered speaking-trumpet and wiped some blood from his face, which had been in collision.

"Up aloft with you and make those topsails fast," he roared. "Look alive, men, look alive!"

And they did look alive, for "Dicky" Dunn never needed a speaking-trumpet in any wind that ever blew. When things were snugged down and the *California* was walking north at an easy but tremendous gait, he felt like a man again. He turned to Simpson and Wiggins with a happy smile.

"Now we're comfortable, and things are as they should be, Mr. Simpson, let the men have a tot of grog. And how's Mr. Blaker?"

"Wa'al," said Simpson cheerfully, "when we left

him he warn't exactly what you would call religious nor resigned."

But if Blaker was not happy, the admiral was thoroughly delighted.

"Now you see what I said was true," he declared at dinner that night; "if I hadn't been an admiral and a man born to rise, how could I have been shipped on board this ship as a foremast hand and come to be captain in six weeks? I'll be bound you never heard of a similar case, Mr. Simpson."

And Simpson never had.

"Was it Shanghai Smith, do you think, as put you here?" he asked.

The admiral had heard of Shanghai Smith in the fo'c'sle.

"When I get back I'll find out," he said. "And if it was, I'll not trouble the law, Mr. Simpson. I never allow any man to handle me without getting more than even."

"You don't," said Simpson. If his manner was dry, it was sincere.

"But I don't bear malice afterwards. Your health, Mr. Simpson. This kind of trade breeds good seamen, after all. But you are all a trifle rough."

Simpson explained that they had to be.

"When the owners' scheme is to have one man do three men's work, they have to get men who will make 'em do it. And when the owners get a bad name and their ships a worse, then men like Shanghai Smith have to find us crews. If you could get back to San Francisco and hammer an owner, some of us would be obliged to you, sir."

"Ah, when I get back!" said the admiral. "This will be a remarkable yarn for me to tell, Mr. Simpson. I still feel in a kind of dream. Would you oblige me by going to Mr. Blaker and telling him that if he continues to hammer at that door I'll have the hose turned on him."

And when Simpson went to convey this message the admiral put his feet on the table and indulged in a reverie.

"I'll make a note about Shanghai Smith, and settle with him in full. But I shall rise higher yet. I know it's in me. Steward!"

"Yes, sir," said the steward.

"I think I'll have some grog."

He drank to the future of Admiral Sir Richard Dunn, master of the *California*.

THE SETTLEMENT WITH SHANGHAI SMITH

(MORLEY ROBERTS)

IT is easy to understand that there was something more than a flutter in shipping circles in San Francisco, to say nothing of the sailors' boarding-houses, when a telegram reached that city from New York which was expanded as follows :—

“ THE LOST ADMIRAL.

“ *Admiral Sir Richard Dunn, whose mysterious disappearance in San Francisco three months ago caused such great excitement, has arrived at New York in command of the ship California. He was, it appears, assaulted and drugged, and put on board that vessel, and owing to a series of exciting incidents during the passage, finally took charge of her. The admiral is in good health. He states that he has no idea who was responsible for the outrage.*”

The bar-tender at Shanghai Smith's house was the first to spot this cable. He put his hand on the bar and vaulted it.

“ Say, Billy, see this.”

He shook up the runner, who was taking a caulk on a hard bench, having been engaged between four and six in getting three drunken men on board the *Wanderer*. It is often easier to get a dozen amenable

to reason than three, just as it is easier to handle many sheep than few. He was very tired and sulky.

"Well, wo'd's up now?" he grunted.

"Hell is up, and flamin'," said Tom. "You ain't forgot the admiral by any chance, now?"

Billy woke up suddenly as if he had been sleeping on the look-out and had been found hard and fast by the mate.

"Eh, what, has the *California* turned up?"

"You bet she has," said Tom. And he burst into laughter. "What d'ye reckon he was on board of her when she came to N' York?"

"Cook's mate?"

"No, captain, captain! Think of that. And he says he don't know who laid him out and put him aboard of her."

Billy rose.

"Here, gimme the paper. You're drunk."

He read the telegram with protruding eyes.

"By the holy frost, but he must be a dandy. Say, Smith must know this."

He marched to Smith's bedroom and induced his boss to sit up and hear the news, after Smith had used more bad language with his eyes shut than most men in San Francisco could lay their tongues to when wide awake.

"Don't I tell you it's about the admiral," expostulated Billy; "it's about Dunn, as you shoved on the *California*."

But now Shanghai was wide awake. He looked at Billy with wicked eyes.

"As I shoved in the *California*, eh? Say that again and I'll get up and knock the corners off of you. You miserable Tarhead, if I hear you whisper that I had the last joint of the little finger of my left hand in the game, I'll murder you."

Billy fell back from the bed in alarm. Though he looked big enough to have eaten Shanghai Smith, he

lacked the "devil" which had made his boss what he was—the terror of the "coast" and of sailors, and a political power in his quarter of the city.

"Oh, very well then, Mr. Smith, but who done it?"

"Understand that no one knows who done it, you dog," said Smith, reaching for what he called his "pants," "but if any one done it, it was you. And don't you forget it. I hire you to do the work, and I'll see you does it. Don't get me mad, or you'll be runnin' to the penitentiary howlin' for ten years to get away from me."

And Billy went back to Tom.

"He's fair luny, that's what he is. But if he reckons I'm goin' to the calaboose for him, he'll run up agin a snag."

And presently Smith came out to breakfast with a face as black as a near cyclone. Billy and Tom jumped when he spoke, and all those men in his house who were in a leeshore, as regards dollars, got away from him and adorned a neighbouring fence.

"What's wrong wiv Shang'ai?" asked a Londoner; "'e's a black 'un, but I never see'd 'im so rorty as this!"

And no one answered him. They were a sick crowd at any time, and now, when their slave-owner roared, their hearts were in their boots.

But Smith was only trying to keep up his own courage. Not once, but many times since he had got even with the man who had given him a thrashing, he had regretted his method of revenge.

"I'd best have bashed him and left him laying on the Front," said Smith, "and here's Tom and Bill know the whole racket. I've half a mind to have them put out of the way. In such a place as this, who *can* a man trust? Bah, it sickens me, it does. It fair sickens me."

He was virtuously indignant with an ungrateful world. Even his revenge had been a failure. How in the name of all that was holy and unholy had the admiral managed to rise from the fo'c'sle to the command of the *California*?

"And I thought Blaker and Simpson was both men!" said Smith with disgust. "There ain't any trustin' to appearances, nor to reputation neither. But how could the swine have done it?"

An early evening paper had the whole story, and as Shanghai was still up town, all his crowd of crimps and slaves roared over the yarn.

"He fo't the mate and was give 'is billet," said one. "I say, but old Blaker was a sport. That's real old Western Ocean packet law. And then Blaker went luny with psalm-singing and the hadmiral locked 'im up. 'Strewth, but it must 'ave bin a picnic! I'd 'ave give a month's wages to see the show. But 'oo was it shang'aied a hadmiral?"

He spoke with bated breath.

"Who'd it be but Smith?" asked the speaker's mate sulkily. "He's a devil, a notorious devil, as we know. He'd shanghai his father for a quarter, if he was dry. And a month back my own brother that shipped in the *Cyrus F. Brown* told me as Shanghai had a down on this very man."

"Then I wouldn't be Smith for all 'is money. This 'll be a Government business."

It would have been if the admiral had been any other kind of man. But Admiral Sir Richard Dunn was one of those, and they get rarer every day, who prefer handling their own affairs. He had a gift of humour, too, and was mightily pleased with himself.

"Whoever it was that laid for me, he never meant to make me master of the *California*," he said, as he came west on the cars. "And whoever he was, I will fix him. The mate was pretty certain it was this Shanghai Smith. If it was——"

If it was, it seemed a healthy thing for Mr. Smith to leave San Francisco and hide somewhere in the Islands. But all his interests kept him where he was, even when H.M.S. *Triumphant* came down again from Esquimault and lay waiting for the admiral off Goat Island.

The crew of the *Triumphant*, being very proud of their own special admiral, were in so furious a rage against any one connected with crimping in the city, that no "liberty" was granted to any one of them.

"It's hall very fine," said the *Triumphants* unanimously, "but these 'ere Americans are too smart by 'alf. Them and hus 'll part brass-rags one of these fine days. But ain't it fine to think that Dicky went to sea as a man before the stick, and came out right on top?"

They chortled with exceeding pleasure—with pleasure founded on his achievements and on the unexpected experiences he had had of sea-life.

"To think of Dicky bunking it among a crowd of merchant Jacks," said the crew. "We'd give a lot to 'ave seen him shinning up aloft for dear life."

But all the same they loved him dearly, and when he came alongside five days later, not all their sense of discipline prevented their breaking into a storm of cheers that rang out across the bay and was almost heard at Oakland. Hard as Dicky Dunn was, he went to his cabin rather in a hurry. For once in his life he could hardly trust himself to speak. But he received the congratulations of the captain and officers, including young Selwyn, who had been with him when he had been kidnapped, with the greatest calm.

"Yes, I've had some experience," he said, "and I don't know that it has done me any harm. I know more of the conditions on board merchant vessels than I did before."

"And what do you propose to do, Sir Richard?"

asked Selwyn, an hour later. "The authorities and the police seemed very anxious to do what they could."

The admiral lighted one of his own cigars, and found it more to his taste than the ship's tobacco of the *California*.

"I don't propose to trouble the police," he said, "nor need there be any international correspondence so far as I'm concerned. I'll play my own game. I think, Selwyn, that I know who laid for us that night. And from what I learnt in the *California* (I learnt a lot, by the way) I've a notion that ordinary justice would never get hold of the man, at least not in San Francisco, not even if I paid for it."

"Then what—"

But Dicky Dunn interrupted him.

"I've a notion," he said significantly.

And that afternoon he sent Selwyn ashore with a very polite note to the chief of the San Francisco police, saying that Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Dunn would be very glad to see that gentleman on board the *Triumphant* late that evening, if he could make it convenient to come.

"Let the band begin to play!" said Mr. Peter Cartwright; "it looks as if I'd better face the music. I wonder if he has any kinkle as to the man who did it? It's more than I have, unless it was Smith, or Sullivan."

As he drew his five thousand dollars a year and pickings partly through the grace of both the notorious boarding-house keepers that he mentioned, he did not relish running against them. Nevertheless, it was better to do that than run against a mightier snag. He looked, with a groan, at the pile of correspondence which had accumulated since the admiral's disappearance.

"And here's the British Consul wants to see me to-morrow!" he cried. "They'll clinch me if they can get no one else."

And he went on board the *Triumphant* feeling as if he was out of a job.

The admiral received him courteously, and was alone.

"This has been a bad business, admiral, sir," said Mr. Cartwright, "and as chief of police of this city I feel it as a personal slur. Your request to see me anticipated me by no more than twelve hours. I proposed to seek an interview with you to-morrow morning."

"I am obliged to you," said the admiral. "Will you have anything to drink?"

"It *was* rather cold on the water," replied Cartwright.

And when the chief of police had a tumbler of hot whisky and water in both hands, the admiral opened up.

"I've sent for you, Mr. Cartwright," he began, "to tell you that I don't want any proceedings taken about this matter."

Cartwright opened his mouth and stared at the admiral in surprise. Then he began to imagine he understood. Sir Richard Dunn had evidently been somewhere on the night of his disappearance which would not suit him to have known.

"Ah, I see," said Cartwright, with a subtle smile.

"I've my own notions as to the brand of justice dispensed in this state, Mr. Cartwright. It is considerably milder than the native liquors. I want your assistance in doing without the law, and in administering justice myself. Have you any notion of the gentleman who shipped me in the *California*?"

"It was probably a boarding-house master," said Cartwright.

"Of course."

"It might have been Sullivan, or the Sheeny, or Williams, or Smith."

"Is that the scoundrel they know here as Shanghai Smith?" asked the admiral.

And Cartwright nodded.

"The crew of the *California* put it down to him at once."

"I don't know that it was necessarily him," said Cartwright pensively; "though he has the worst name, he's no worse than the others. For my own part, I reckon the Sheeny—he's a Jew boy, of course—is a deal tougher than Smith."

And just then Selwyn, who knew the chief of police was on board, put his head into the admiral's cabin.

"Could I speak to you a moment, Sir Richard?"

And Dicky Dunn went outside.

"I thought, as you had this Cartwright with you, sir," said Selwyn, "that I ought to tell you a queer yarn that has just been brought me by one of the quartermasters. It seems that one of the men has a story that you once had a fight with Shanghai Smith and hurt him badly. It was in Australia, I believe—in Melbourne."

"Stay a minute," said the admiral; "let me think. Yes, by Jove, I did have a row on Sandridge Pier years ago, and I broke the man up so that he had to go to a hospital. And his name—yes, it *was* Smith. Thanks, Selwyn, I'll see if this man ever was in Australia."

He went back to Cartwright.

"Now as to the Sheeny, admiral," said Cartwright, who was beginning to feel comfortable.

"Never mind the Sheeny, Mr. Cartwright," said his host; "do you know Smith's record? Where did he come from?"

"He came from Melbourne," replied the chief.

And the admiral slapped his leg.

"That's the man, I believe."

"Why?"

"Never mind why," said Dunn. "But supposing it was, could we prove it against him?"

"I doubt it," said Cartwright cheerfully. "Prob-

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ably no one would know it but his runner. And Bill Haines would perjure himself as easy as drink lager."

"But if we did prove it?"

"There'd be an appeal, and so on," said the chief.

He indicated large and generous delay on the part of the merciful American law by a wave of his hand.

"You see we couldn't prove, anyhow, that he knew you was you," said Cartwright, "and if I know my own business, it would come down to a matter of assault and so many dollars."

"That's what I imagined," said the admiral. "So I propose to take the matter in hand myself and relieve you of it. For though Smith, or the real man, might come off easily, if I choose to have it made an international business some one will have to pay who is not guilty."

"That's likely enough," said Cartwright uneasily. "On the whole, admiral, I'd rather you took the job on yourself, provided it was put through quietly. What do you propose?"

Dunn put his hands in his pockets, and "quarter-decked" his cabin.

"I want to be sure it's Smith—morally sure. How can I be made sure? I'll tell you now what I know about him."

He repeated what Selwyn had said, and told him the story of his having fought a man on Sandridge Pier at Melbourne fifteen years before.

"His name was Smith."

"It fits as neat as a pair of handcuffs," said the chief of police. "I'll think over it and let you know. Stay, sirree, I've got it now. Look here, admiral, now you mark me. This is a scheme. It'll work, or my name's Dennis. I'll have it put about in the right quarter that though there ain't evidence to touch the real man who worked the racket on you, it is known who actually corralled you and shoved you on the *California*. I'll get the proper man to give it

away that a warrant is being made out. And next day I'll have all the runners of all the chief boarding-houses arrested. Do you see?"

"No, I don't," said the admiral.

"Oh, come," cried Cartwright. "The man we don't arrest will be the man who done it."

"Yes, but—"

"Well," said Cartwright, "I understood you didn't particularly hanker to catch the understrapper."

"Ah," said the admiral, "of course I see. You mean—"

"I mean the boarding-house boss will shove the runner that did it out of sight. And then you'll know him by reason of the very means he takes not to be given away. For of course he'd reckon that the runner on being held would squeal."

"It's a good plan," said the admiral. "And when I know, what kind of punishment would Mr. Smith like least of all?"

"Provided you remember he's an American citizen, I don't care what you do," replied the chief. "But if you asked me, I should get him served the way he's served you. Shanghai Smith among a crowd of sailors in an American ship, such as the *Harvester* (and the skipper of the *Harvester* hates him like poison)—and *she* sails in three days—would have a picnic to recollect all his life. For, you see, they know him."

"I'll think it over," said the admiral. "Your plan is excellent."

"So it is," said Cartwright, as he was rowed ashore, "for Smith ain't no favourite of mine, and at the same time it will look as if I gave him the straight racket, anyhow."

He sent an agent down to the water-front that very night. The man dropped casual hints at the boarding-houses, and he dropped them on barren ground everywhere but at Shanghai Smith's.

"Jehoshaphat," said Smith, "so that's the game!"

Peter Cartwright had, in his own language, "reckoned him up to rights"; for the very first move that Smith played was to make a break for Billy's room. As the runner had been up most of the night before enticing sailors off a Liverpool ship just to keep his hand in, he was as fast asleep as a bear on Christmas Day, and he was mighty sulky when Smith shook him out of sleep by the simple process of yanking his pillow from under his head.

"Ain't a man to get no sleep that works for you?" he demanded. "What's up now?"

"Hell is up, and fizzling," replied Smith. "I've had word from Peter Cartwright that you'll be arrested in the mornin' if you don't skin out. It's the admiral. I wish I'd never set eyes on him. Come, dress and skip: 'twon't do for you to be gaoled; mebbe they'd hold you on some charge till you forgot all you owe to me. There ain't no such thing as real gratitude left on earth."

Billy rose and shuffled into his clothes sullenly enough.

"And where am I to skip to?"

"To Portland," said Smith; "the *Mendocino* leaves in the mornin' for Crescent City and Astoria, don't she? Well, then, go with her and lie up with Grant or Sullivan in Portland till I let you know the coast is clear. And here's twenty dollars: go easy with it."

He sighed to part with the money.

"I'd sooner go down to Los Angeles," grunted Billy.

But Smith explained to him with urgent and explosive blasphemy that he was to get into another State in order to complicate legal matters.

"You've the brains of a Flathead Indian, you have," said Smith, as he turned Billy into the street

on his way to find the *Mendocino*. "What's the use of havin' law if you don't use it?"

And in the morning, when Smith heard that ten runners at least had been urgently invited to interview Mr. Peter Cartwright, he was glad to be able to declare that Billy was not on hand.

"He's gone East to see his old man," he said drily. "And as his father is a millionaire and lives in the Fifth Avenue, N' York, he couldn't afford to disregard his dyin' desire to see him."

"You are a daisy, Smith," said the police officer who had come for Billy. "Between you and me, what have you done with him?"

Smith shook his head.

"I shot him last night and cut him up and pickled him in a cask," he said with a wink. "And I've shipped him to the British Ambassador at Washington, C.O.D."

"You're as close as a clam, ain't you, Smith? But I tell you Peter is havin' a picnic. This admiral's game was playin' it low down on Peter, whoever did it. There are times when a man can't help his friends."

Smith lied freely.

"You can tell Peter I had nothin' to do with it."

"Yes, I can *tell* him!" said the police officer.

And he did tell him. As a result the chief of police wrote to the admiral :

"SIR,—I have interrogated all the runners but one belonging to the chief boarding-houses, and have succeeded in obtaining no clue. The one man missing was runner to Mr. William Smith, commonly known as 'Shanghai' Smith. Under the circumstances, and considering what you said to me, I am inclined to wait developments. If you will inform me what you wish me to do, I shall be glad to accommodate you in any way.—Yours truly,

"PETER CARTWRIGHT."

"P.S.—If you could write me a letter saying you are quite satisfied with the steps I have taken to bring the offender to justice, I should be obliged.

"P.S.—If you wish to meet Mr. John P. Sant, captain of the *Harvester*, now lying in the bay and sailing the day after to-morrow, I can arrange it."

But both the postscripts were written on separate pieces of paper. Mr. Cartwright was not chief of police in a land of justice for nothing. He knew his way about.

Dicky Dunn, on receiving Peter's letter, called in his flag-lieutenant.

"When they shanghaied me, they knocked you about rather badly, didn't they, Selwyn?"

Selwyn instinctively put his hand to the back of his head.

"Yes, Sir Richard. They sand-bagged me, as they call it, and kicked me too."

"I'm pretty sure I know who did it," said the admiral, "and I'm proposing to get even with the man myself. It seems that it will be a difficult thing to prove. Besides, I'm not built that way. I don't want to prove it and send the man to gaol. I like getting even in my own fashion. What would you do if I could tell you who it was that laid the plot against us that night?"

Selwyn was a clean-skinned, bright-eyed, close-shaven young fellow, as typical an Anglo-Saxon salted in the seas as one could meet. His eyes sparkled now.

"I—I'd punch his head, sir."

The admiral nodded.

"I believe I did punch his head, years ago, Selwyn. But he was looking for a fight and found it, and ought to have been satisfied. Between you and me and no one else, the chief of police here and I have fixed this matter up between us. He says that he has no

evidence, and the only man who might have given the affair away has been shipped off somewhere. I'm going to show Mr. Smith that he didn't make a bucko mate of me for nothing. And I want you to help. I've got a scheme."

He unfolded it to Selwyn, and the young lieutenant chuckled.

"He used to be a seaman," said the admiral, "but for twelve years he's been living comfortably on shore, sucking the blood of sailors. And if I know anything about American ships—and I do—he'll find three months in the fo'c'sle of this *Harvester* worse than three years in a gaol. Now we're going to invade the United States quite unofficially, with the connivance of the police!"

He lay back and laughed.

"Oh, I tell you," said the admiral, "he ran against something not laid down in his chart when he fell in with me. You can come ashore with me now and we'll see this Cartwright. American ways suit me, after all."

"Then I understand, Mr. Cartwright," said the admiral, an hour later, "that there won't be a policeman anywhere within hail of this Smith's house tomorrow night?"

"I've got other business for them," said Peter.

"And I can see Mr. Sant here this afternoon?"

"I'll undertake to have him here if you call along at three."

He spent the interval at lunch with the British Consul.

"I tell you what, Stanley," said the admiral, "I don't care what they did to me, for it's done me no harm. But after this you should be able to make them enforce the laws. If they would only do that, the Pacific Coast wouldn't stink so in the nostrils of shipmasters and shipowners."

The consul explained the local system of politics. It appeared that every one with any business on the borders of crime insured against the results of accidents by being in politics.

"And if the thieving politicians appoint the man to control them, what's the result?"

"The result is—Shanghai Smith," said the admiral. "Well, I'll see you later. I've an appointment with Mr. Sant of the *Harvester*."

The consul stared.

"What, with Sant? Why, he got eighteen months' hard labour for killing a man six months ago."

"But he's not in prison?"

"Of course not," said the consul. "He was pardoned by the Governor."

"He's just the man I wish to see," cried Dicky Dunn.

He found Sant waiting at Cartwright's office. He was a hard-bitted, weather-beaten gentleman, and half his face was jaw. That jaw had hold of a long cigar with his back teeth. He continued smoking and chewing, and did both savagely. What Peter had said to him did not come out, but by agreement the admiral was introduced as Mr. Dunn.

"You have reason not to like Shanghai Smith?" said Peter.

"That's so," nodded Sant.

"Mr. Dunn does not like him either. Could you make any use of him on board the *Harvester*?"

"I could," said Sant, grinning; "he'd be a useful man."

"If you imagined you missed a man to-morrow morning just as you were getting up your anchor, and some one hailed you and said they had picked one up, you would take him aboard?"

"Wet or dry," said Sant.

"I'll undertake he shall be wet," said the admiral. "Eh?" And he turned to Selwyn.

"Yes, sir," replied the lieutenant, "that could be arranged."

"Very well, Mr. Sant," said the admiral.

"And it's understood, of course," said Peter, "that you gentlemen never saw each other and don't know each other when you meet, it being a matter of mutual obligation."

"I agree," said Sant. And the admiral shook hands with a gentleman who had been pardoned by an amiable Governor.

"And of course," Cartwright added as he escorted the admiral and Selwyn into the passage, "if there should be a shindy at Smith's and any of your men are in it, we shall all explain that it was owing to your having been put away. And two wrongs then will make it right. I guess the newspapers will call it square."

"Exactly so," said the admiral.

And when he reached the *Triumphant* he had very nearly worked out the plan by which the row at Shanghai Smith's was to occur.

"I'll just go over it with you, Selwyn," he said, when he reached his cabin again. "Now you must remember I rely on your discretion. A wrong step may land us in trouble with the authorities and the Admiralty. There never was a Government department yet which wouldn't resent losing a fine chance of a paper row, and if they catch me settling this matter out of hand, my name is Dennis, as the Americans say. And I don't want your name to be Dennis either."

"Well, what do you propose, Sir Richard?" asked Selwyn.

"This is rightly your show and mine," said the admiral. "I won't have any one else in it, that I can help. I ought to speak to Hamilton, but I won't. I'll keep him out of the trouble"—for Hamilton was the captain of the *Triumphant*. "I

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suppose the men here *are* really fond of me?" said the admiral interrogatively.

"They have no monopoly of that," said Selwyn.

"Is there any one of them you could drop a hint to, that you could trust?"

"Of course," said Selwyn; "there's Benson, whose father works for mine as gardener. We used to fight in the toolhouse at home, and now he would jump overboard if I asked him."

"Do you mean Benson, my coxs'n?"

"Yes, sir."

"He's the very man. You might let him know that if he *should* get into any trouble, he will be paid for it. I leave the rest to you. You can go ashore now, with this note to Stanley. That will give you a chance to take Benson with you and speak to him on the quiet. I don't know that I care particularly to hear any more about it till the day after to-morrow, unless I have to. Ultimately all the responsibility is mine, of course."

And by that Selwyn understood rightly enough that Dicky Dunn, for all his cunning, had no intention of shirking trouble if trouble came. He went ashore and took Benson up town with him.

"Do the men think it was Shanghai Smith that laid for us, and put the admiral away, Benson?" he asked, as they went up Market Street.

"There ain't the shadder of a doubt 'e done it, sir," said Benson.

"And they don't like it?"

"Lord bless you, sir. It's very 'ard 'avin' all liberty stopped, but between you and me it was wise to stop it. They would have rooted 'is 'ouse up and shied the wreckage into the bay."

"It's a pity that you and about twenty more couldn't do it," said Selwyn. "And if one could only catch hold of the man himself and put him on board an outward bound ship, it would do him good."

Benson slapped his leg.

"Oh, sir, there ain't a man on board the *Triumphant* that wouldn't do six months with pleasure to ave the 'andlin' of 'im."

"No?"

"For sure, sir."

"I was lying awake last night thinking of it," said Selwyn; "at least, I believe I was awake—perhaps I was dreaming. But I seemed to think that a couple of boats' crews were ashore, and that you went to Shanghai's place for a drink."

"I've done that same, sir," said Benson, "and the liquor was cruel bad."

"And I dreamed—yes, I suppose it was a dream—that you started a row and made hay of his bar and collared him, and took him in the cutter and rowed him round the bay till about four in the morning."

"You always was very imaginary and dreamy as a boy, sir, begging your pardon, sir," said Benson.

"And I dreamed you came to the *Harvester*—"

"Her that's lying in the bay—the ship with the bad name among sailors?"

"That's the ship," said Selwyn; "and you hailed her and asked the captain if a man had tried to escape by swimming. And he said 'Yes,' and then you said you'd picked him up."

Benson looked at him quickly.

"But he wouldn't be wet, sir."

"Oh yes, he would, Benson. You could easily duck him overboard."

Benson stared very hard at the lieutenant.

"Of course. I could very easily duck him—and love to do it, too. And did the captain of the *Harvester* own to him, sir?"

Selwyn nodded.

"He would, Benson—I mean he did, of course."

"I suppose," asked Benson, with his eyes on the pavement, "that it had been arranged so?"

"In the dream, yes," said the lieutenant.

"Was it for to-morrow evening, sir?"

"I thought so," said Selwyn. "And the curious thing about it was that the whole thing was done as quietly as possible. All you men went to work in silence without as much as a hurrah. And one of the boats brought me ashore and the other brought the admiral. And it was only after you had put the man on board the *Harvester* that you came back for the admiral at five in the morning, Benson."

"And what about the boat as brought you, sir?"

"I came back at twelve and went on board with them, after the fight, and while you were rowing Mr. Smith about the bay, cheering him up."

"Was there anything else, sir?"

"Nothing," said Selwyn, "only that I forgot whether it came out. If it did, the men said it was a game all of their own. And I think—no, I'm sure—that if any one got into trouble it paid him well, after all."

"Of course it would, sir," said Benson warmly. "I wish it could really come off. You never know your luck, sir."

"I think Mr. Smith doesn't," said Selwyn.

And when Benson went on board again and had a long confabulation with two boats' crews, there was a unanimous opinion among them that Mr. Smith had piled his ship up with a vengeance when he ran against a British admiral.

"There ain't to be no weapons," said Benson—"nothin' worse nor more cuttin' than a staysail 'ank as a knuckle-duster, and even that I don't recommend. An odd stretcher or two and the bottles there will do the job. And the word is silence, now and then."

"Mum's the word," said the men. And like the children that they were, they wrought the whole ship's company into a frenzy of excitement, by

dropping hints about as heavy as a half-hundred-weight on every one who was not in the game. Had there been much longer to wait than twenty-four hours, they must have told, or burst. And if they had not burst, the others would have finally reached the truth by the process of exhaustion.

It was nine o'clock on the following evening that the admiral went on shore to dine with the British consul. He told Benson that he might be later than eleven. And as Benson touched his cap he took the liberty of believing he might be as late as five in the morning. And just about eleven Selwyn came ashore in another boat with papers which had to go to the admiral. That is what he said to the first lieutenant. Captain Hamilton was sleeping the night at the house of a cousin of his in San Francisco.

"I shall be back in an hour, Thomas," said Selwyn. And the two coxs'ns were left in command of the cutting-out expedition. The whole business was nearly wrecked at the outset by the settlement of the question as to who was to be left in charge of the boats. Finally Thomas and Benson ordered two men to stay, and the defrauded men sat back and growled most horribly as the rest moved off towards Shanghai Smith's in loose order.

"Look 'ere," said Billings to Graves as they were left alone, "it's hobvious one must stay with the boats; but one's enough, and on an hexpedition like this, horders ain't worth a damn. I'll howe you a quid, a whole quid, and my grog for a month if you'll be the man to stay."

"No, I'll toss you, the same terms both sides."

And the spin of the coin sent Billings running after the rest. He was received by Benson with curses, but he stuck to the party all the same.

"Very well, you report me! You know you can't," he said defiantly. "And I've give Graves a thick 'un and my grog for a month to be let come."

This awful sacrifice appealed even to Benson.

"All right," he said. "But if I can't report you for this, I can the next time."

"Next time be damned," cried Billings; "'oo cares about next time, now?"

And they hove in sight of Shanghai Smith's.

It was the first time a bluejacket had been near the place since a day or two before the admiral's disappearance. And at first when Shanghai saw them come in he regretted that Billy, his best fighting man, was by now well on his way to Portland. But for at least ten minutes the *Triumphants* behaved very well. Benson had a good head and had arranged matters very neatly.

"You look 'ere," he had said; "the thing to look out for is the barman. He keeps a gun, as they calls it 'ere, on a shelf under the bar. Smith, 'e'll 'ave one in his pocket. So when I says, 'This rum would poison a dog,' don't wait for no back-answer, but lay the bar-keeper out quick, with a stone matchbox or anything 'andy. And the nearest to Smith does the same to 'im. He'll likely not be be'ind, but if 'e is, bottle 'im too, and not a word of jaw about it first or last."

They stood up to the bar, and Benson ordered drinks for himself and three particular pals of his.

"Ain't this Mr. Smith's?" he asked.

"I'm Smith," said Shanghai.

"'Ere's to you. I've often heard of you," said Benson. And three or four merchant seamen sitting about the room sniggered and passed a few sneering remarks among themselves about "Liberty Jack."

Smith, who had taken enough that night to make him rash, referred to the admiral.

"So your admiral has come back, has he?"

"He has," said the *Triumphants*. "And Dicky Dunn is lookin' for the man that played that dirty game on him."

And Smith shrugged his shoulders as he half turned away.

"Tain't half so dirty as this rum," said Benson ; "it would poison a dog."

And as the words left his mouth the ball opened with a sudden and tremendous crash. Two heavy matchboxes went for Tom behind the bar ; one laid him out as quietly as if he had been hocussed ; the other smashed a bottle which held a liquor known on the Barbary Coast as brandy, and starred the mirror behind the shelves. Thomas at the same moment stooped and caught Shanghai Smith by the ankles and pitched him on his head. He never had time to reach for his "gun." The merchant seamen jumped to their feet and made for the door.

"Stop them!" said Benson, and half a dozen bluejackets hustled them back again. "No you don't, Johnnies ; you can stay and 'ave free drinks, and look after the man behind the bar. Drag out that Smith and get 'im in the open air." And Thomas dragged Smith into the darkness by his collar.

"There's to be no drinkin' for us," said Benson. "Smash what you like, and taste nothin'." And in less than a minute Shanghai's place was a lamentable and ghastly spectacle.

"Serves him right," said one of the merchant seamen, as he salved a bottle of poison. "Oh, ain't he a sailor-robbing swine ?"

"Fetch him in and let him look at it," said Benson, with a wink.

Thomas had been primed.

"He's come to and run like billy-oh !" he cried.

But Smith was incapable of running. He was being carried by two bluejackets.

"After 'im, after 'im," said Benson ; and in another moment the whole house was clear.

When Tom came to, he found the place a wreck, and four boarders too far gone in free liquor to offer

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any useful explanation of what had occurred since
the rum had been pronounced fit to poison a dog.

"All I know is," said the soberest, "that he fit
and we fit and fit and fit, and then 'e run."

And when Tom sought for the police, it was very odd that there was not one to be found in the quarter of San Francisco which most needs clubbing to keep it in order. There was not even one to bear witness that a crowd of bluejackets and an American citizen had come along the water-front at midnight. But five minutes after midnight a British lieutenant could have taken his oath that both crews were in their boats and at least moderately sober.

"I've seen the admiral, Benson," said Selwyn, as he stepped into his boat and sat down, "and he *may* be later than he said."

"Very well, sir," replied Benson.

And as soon as Selwyn had disappeared into the darkness, the boat with Mr. Shanghai Smith in followed suit. And the bay of San Francisco is not so well policed that they had any one inquiring what they were doing as they pulled across to Saucelito, and laid up quietly till three o'clock.

"He ain't dead, we hopes," said the crew of the boat.

"Not 'e," said Benson; "'is 'eart beats all to rights, and 'is head is perfectly sound, bar a lump the size of a 'en's egg. That upendin' dodge of Thomas's is very fatal in a row—oh, it's very fatal."

It was nearly two o'clock before Shanghai made any motion. But when he did begin to get conscious, he found his mind and his tongue with surprising rapidity.

"That 'ead of yours must be made of five-eighths boiler-plate, Mr. Smith," said Benson, as Smith sat up suddenly.

"What am I doin' here?" asked Smith.

"'Ow do we know?" asked the delighted crew.

" You *would* come. It warn't no good excusin' of ourselves."

Smith put his hand to his head.

" Who hit me ? " he demanded savagely.

" No one," said the crew unanimously ; " you tried to stand on your 'ead."

" Put me ashore," said Smith. " What are you goin' to do ? "

" We're waitin' to see the '*Arvester*' yonder 'eave 'er anchor up," replied Benson. " We're in the sailor-supplyin' line, we are, same as you was."

" He don't like to hear that," said Billings ; " we're cutting him out of a job. And this time we ain't supplyin' admirals."

" No, we ain't. Yah, you man-buyin', sailor-robbin' swine ! And 'twas you dared touch our admiral. Oh, you dog, you ! "

They all took a turn at him, and Smith saw he was in the tightest corner he had ever occupied. This was satisfactorily expressed for him.

" Say, Shanghai, did you ever hear of Barney's bull ? "

And when Smith refused to answer, they answered for him.

" He was jammed in a clinch, and so are you. You're goin' to 'ave the finest time of all your life. Did you ever 'ear of Sant of the '*Arvester*' ? "

And Smith, for all his brutal courage, shook in his boots.

" I'll give you chaps a hundred dollars to put me ashore," he cried. " I never touched Sir Richard Dunn."

" Dry up," said Benson, " and don't lie. We wouldn't part with you, my jewel, not for a thousand. What made you desert from the '*Arvester*', a comfortable ship like that, with sich a duck of a skipper ? "

" I'll give you a thousand," said Smith desperately.

" At four o'clock you're goin' on the '*Arvester*'—

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and 'tis nigh on three now. Sant wouldn't miss a man like you, so smart and 'andy, for all the gold in Californy. Own up as you shanghaied the admiral?"

Smith grasped at any chance of avoiding the *Harvester*. For Sant had a dreadful name, and both his mates were terrors.

"If I own I put him away, will you take me ashore and hand me over to the police?"

He was almost in a state of collapse.

Benson looked at the man, and in the faint light of far-off day still below the horizon the boat's crew saw him wink.

"We'll vote on it, if you owns up. What d'ye say, chaps?"

"Ay, we'll vote," said the men. "Say, did you do it?"

But Smith saw how the voting would go, and refused to speak. They heard six bells come across the water from many ships. And then they heard seven. There was a grey glint in the east. The sand-dunes on the verge of the Ocean Pack whitened as they pulled for the *Harvester*. They heard the clank of her windlass brakes and the bull voice of her mate, as he encouraged his men to do their best by threatening them with three months of hell afloat.

Smith offered Benson two thousand dollars.

"I wouldn't part with you except to Sant for all you ever robbed men of," said Benson—"and what that is, on'y you knows. Pull, boys; her cable's up and down. No, hold on a moment; he must be wet, of course."

In spite of his struggles they put him over the side and soused him thoroughly. When they pulled him on board again, he sat cursing.

"Now, boys, bend your backs."

And when he came up alongside the *Harvester* she was just moving under the draught of her loosed top-sails.

"*Harvester*, ahoy!" cried Benson.

"Hallo!" said Sant. "What is it?"

"You don't happen to have lost one of your crew, tryin' to desert by swimmin', sir?"

"Have you picked him up? What's his name, does he say?"

"It's Smith, sir."

"That's the man," said Sant. "I want him badly."

But Smith cried out—

"This is kidnappin', Mr. Sant. I refuse to go."

"Oh, Smith," said Sant, "I'll take all the chances of it's bein' anythin' you like. Throw them a rope."

And the *Triumphants* towed alongside.

"Up you go," said Benson.

"I won't," said Smith.

"Won't you?" asked Benson. "We'll see about that. Hook on there, Billings."

And the next moment Smith was jammed in a running bowline round his waist.

"Sway him up," said Benson; and the crew of the *Harvester* hoisted the notorious robber with about the only feelings of pleasure they were likely to know till they reached New York. And the *Triumphants* pushed off as they heard the mate address Mr. Smith in language which did his reputation and the reputation of the ship most ample justice.

"There's talk, and there's a fore-topsail-yard-ahoy voice for you," said Benson. "Oh, Mr. Smith will be looked after, he will. Now, chaps, pull for it, or the admiral will be waitin', and if that 'appens, 'twill be 'Stand from under.'"

THE FAR ISLANDS

(JOHN BUCHAN)

I

WHEN Bran the Blessed, as the story goes, followed the white bird on the Last Questing, knowing that return was not for him, he gave gifts to his followers. To Heliodorus he gave the gift of winning speech, and straightway the man went south to the Italian seas, and becoming a scholar, left many descendants who sat in the high places of the Church. To Raymond he gave his steel battle-axe, and bade him take the warrior's path and hew his way to a throne ; which the man forthwith accomplished, and became an ancestor in the fourth degree of the first King of Scots. But to Colin, the youngest and the dearest, he gave no gift, whispering only a word in his ear and laying a finger on his eyelids. Yet Colin was satisfied, and he alone of the three, after their master's going, remained on that coast of rock and heather.

In the third generation from Colin, as our elders counted years, came one Colin the Red, who built his keep on the cliffs of Acharra and was a mighty sea-rover in his day. Five times he sailed to the rich parts of France, and a good score of times he carried his flag of three stars against the easterly vikings. A mere name in story, but a sounding piece of nomenclature well garnished with tales. A master-mind by all accounts, but cursed with a habit of fantasy ; for hearing in his old age of a land to the westward, he

forthwith sailed into the sunset, and three days later was washed up, a twisted body, on one of the outer isles.

So far it is but legend, but with his grandson, Colin the Red, we fall into the safer hands of the chroniclers. To him God gave the unnumbered sorrows of story-telling, for he was a bard, cursed with a bard's fervours, and none the less a mighty warrior among his own folk. He it was who wrote the lament called "The White Waters of Usna," and the exquisite chain of romances, "Glede-red Gold and Grey Silver." His tales were told by many fires down to our grandfathers' time, and you will find them still pounded at by the folklorists. But his airs—they are eternal. On harp and pipe they have lived through the centuries; twisted and tortured, they survive in many song-books; and the other day I heard the most beautiful of them all murdered by a band at a French watering-place. This Colin led the wanderer's life, for he disappeared at middle age, no one knew whither, and his return was long looked for by his people. Some thought that he became a Christian monk, the holy man living in the seagirt isle of Cuna, who was found dead in extreme old age, kneeling on the beach, with his arms, contrary to the fashion of the Church, stretched to the westward.

As history narrowed into bonds and forms, the descendants of Colin took Raden for their surname, and settled more firmly on their lands in the long peninsula of crag and inlets which runs west to the Atlantic. Under Donald of the Isles they harried the Kings of Scots, or, on their own authority, made war on Macleans and Macranalds, till their flag of the three stars, their badge of the grey-goose feather, and their on-cry of "Cuna" were feared from Lochalsh to Cantire. Later they made a truce with the king, and entered the royal councils. For years they warded the western coast, and as king's lieutenants smoked out the in-

ferior pirates of Eigg and Toronsay. A Raden was made a Lord of Sleat, another was given lands in the low country and the name Baron of Strathyre, but their honours were transitory and short as their lives. Rarely one of the house saw middle age. A bold, handsome, and stirring race, it was their fate to be cut off in the rude warfare of the times, or, if peace had them in its clutches, to man vessel and set off once more on those mad western voyages which were the weird of the family. Three of the name were found drowned on the far shore of Cuna; more than one sailed straight out of the ken of mortals. One rode with the Good Lord James on the pilgrimage of the Heart of Bruce, and died by his leader's side in the Saracen battle. Long afterwards a Raden led the western men against the Cheshire archers at Flodden, and was slain himself in the steel circle around the king.

But the years brought peace and a greater wealth, and soon the cold stone tower was left solitary on the headland, and the new house of Kinlochuna rose by the green links of the stream. The family changed its faith, and an Episcopal chaplain took the place of the old mass-priest in the tutoring of the sons. Radens were in the '15 and the '45. They rose with Bute to power, and they long disputed the pride of Dundas in the northern capital. They intermarried with great English houses till the sons of the family were Scots only in name, living much abroad or in London, many of them English landowners by virtue of a mother's blood. Soon the race was of the common over-civilized type, graceful, well-mannered, with abundant good looks, but only once in a generation reverting to the rugged northern strength. Eton and Oxford had in turn displaced the family chaplain, and the house by the windy headland grew emptier and emptier save when grouse and deer brought home its fickle masters.

II

A childish illness sent Colin to Kinlochuna when he had reached the mature age of five, and delicate health kept him there for the greater part of the next six years. During the winter he lived in London, but from the late northern spring, through all the long bright summers, he lived in the great tenantless place without company—for he was an only child. A French nurse had the charge of his doings, and when he had passed through the formality of lessons there were the long pine woods at his disposal, the rough moor, the wonderful black holes with the rich black mud in them, and best of all the bay of Acharra, below the headland, with Cuna lying in the waves a mile to the west. At such times his father was busy elsewhere ; his mother was dead ; the family had few near relatives ; so he passed a solitary childhood in the company of seagulls and the birds of the moor.

His time for the beach was the afternoon. On the left as you go down through the woods from the house there runs out the great headland of Acharra, red and grey with mosses, and with a nimbus always of screaming seafowl. To the right runs a low beach of sand, passing into rough limestone boulders and then into the heather of the wood. This in turn is bounded by a reef of low rocks falling by gentle breaks to the water's edge. It is crowned with a tangle of heath and fern, bright at most seasons with flowers, and dwarf pine trees straggle on its crest till one sees the meaning of its Gaelic name “The Ragged Cocks-comb.” This place was Colin’s playground in fine weather. When it blew rain or snow from the north he dwelt indoors among dogs and books, puzzling his way through great volumes from his father’s shelves. But when the mild west-wind weather fell on the sea, then he would lie on the hot sand—Amèlie the nurse

reading a novel on the nearest rock—and kick his small heels as he followed his fancy. He built great sand castles to the shape of Acharra old tower, and peopled them with preposterous knights and ladies ; he drew great moats and rivers for the tide to fill ; he fought battles innumerable with crackling seaweed, till Amélie, with her sharp cry of “Colín, Colín,” would carry him houseward for tea.

Two fancies remained in his mind through those boyish years. One was about the mysterious shining sea before him. In certain weathers it seemed to him a solid pathway. Cuna, the little ragged isle, ceased to block the horizon, and his own white road ran away down into the west, till suddenly it stopped and he saw no farther. He knew he ought to see more, but always at one place, just when his thoughts were pacing the white road most gallantly, there came a baffling mist to his sight, and he found himself looking at a commonplace sea with Cuna lying very real and palpable in the offing. It was a vexatious limitation, for all his dreams were about this pathway. One day in June, when the waters slept in a deep heat, he came down the sands barefoot, and lo ! there was his pathway. For one moment things seemed clear, the mist had not gathered on the road, and with a cry he ran down to the tide’s edge and waded in. The touch of water dispelled the illusion, and almost in tears he saw the cruel back of Cuna blotting out his own magic way.

The other fancy was about the low ridge of rocks which bounded the bay on the right. His walks had never extended beyond it, either on the sands or inland, for that way lay a steep hillside and a perilous bog. But often on the sands he had come to its foot and wondered what country lay beyond. He made many efforts to explore it, difficult efforts, for the vigilant Amélie had first to be avoided. Once he was almost at the top, when some seaweed to which he

clung gave way, and he rolled back again to the soft warm sand. By-and-by he found that he knew what was beyond. A clear picture had built itself up in his brain of a mile of reefs, with sand in bars between them, and beyond all a sea-wood of alders slipping from the hill's skirts to the water's edge. This was not what he wanted in his explorations, so he stopped, till one day it struck him that the westward view might reveal something beyond the hog-backed Cuna. One day, pioneering alone, he scaled the steepest heights of the seaweed and pulled his chin over the crest of the ridge. There, sure enough, was his picture—a mile of reefs and the tattered sea-wood. He turned eagerly seawards. Cuna still lay humped on the waters, but beyond it he seemed to see his shining pathway running far to a speck which might be an island. Crazy with pleasure he stared at the vision, till slowly it melted into the waves, and Cuna the inexorable once more blocked the sky-line. He climbed down, his heart in a doubt between despondency and hope.

It was the last day of such fancies, for on the morrow he had to face the new world of school.

At Cecil's Colin found a new life and a thousand new interests. His early delicacy had been driven away by the sea winds of Acharra, and he was rapidly growing up a tall, strong child, straight of limb like all his house, but sinewy and alert beyond his years. He learned new games with astonishing facility, became a fast bowler with a genius for twists, and a Rugby three-quarter full of pluck and cunning. He soon attained to the modified popularity of a private school, and being essentially clean, strong, and healthy, found himself a mark for his juniors' worship and a favourite with masters. The homage did not spoil him, for no boy was ever less self-possessed. On the cricket ground and the football field he was a leader,

but in private he had the nervous, sensitive manners of the would-be recluse. No one ever accused him of "side"—his polite, halting address was the same to junior and senior; and the result was that wild affection which simplicity in the great is wont to inspire. He spoke with a pure accent, in which lurked no northern trace; in a little he had forgotten all about his birthplace and his origin. His name had at first acquired for him the sobriquet of "Scottie," but the title was soon dropped from its manifest ineptness.

In his second year at Cecil's he caught a prevalent fever, and for days lay very near the brink of death. At his worst he was wildly delirious, crying ceaselessly for Acharra and the beach at Kinlochuna. But as he grew convalescent the absorption remained, and for the moment he seemed to have forgotten his southern life. He found himself playing on the sands, always with the boundary ridge before him, and the hump of Cuna rising in the sea. When dragged back to his environment by the inquiries of Bellew, his special friend, who came to sit with him, he was so abstracted and forgetful that the good Bellew was seriously grieved. "The chap's a bit cracked, you know," he announced in hall. "Didn't know me. Asked me what 'footer' meant when I told him about the Bayswick match, and talked about nothing but a lot of heathen Scotch names."

One dream haunted Colin throughout the days of his recovery. He was tormented with a furious thirst, poorly assuaged at long intervals by watered milk. So when he crossed the borders of dreamland his first search was always for a well. He tried the brushwood inland from the beach, but it was dry as stone. Then he climbed with difficulty the boundary ridge, and found little pools of salt water, while far on the other side gleamed the dark black bog-holes. Here was not what he sought, and he was in deep despair, till suddenly over the sea he caught a glimpse of his old

path running beyond Cuna to a bank of mist. He rushed down to the tide's edge, and to his amazement found solid ground. Now was the chance for which he had long looked, and he ran happily westwards, till of a sudden the solid earth seemed to sink with him, and he was in the waters struggling. But two curious things he noted. One was that the far bank of mist seemed to open for a pin-point of time, and he had a gleam of land. He saw nothing distinctly, only a line which was not mist and was not water. The second was that the water was fresh, and as he was drinking from this curious new fresh sea he awoke. The dream was repeated three times before he left the sickroom. Always he wakened at the same place, always he quenched his thirst in the fresh sea, but never again did the mist open for him, and show him the strange country.

From Cecil's he went to the famous school which was the tradition in his family. The Head spoke to his house-master of his coming. "We are to have another Raden here," he said, "and I am glad of it, if the young one turns out to be anything like the others. There's a good deal of dry-rot among the boys just now. They are all too old for their years and too wise in the wrong way. They haven't anything like the enthusiasm in games they had twenty years ago when I first came here. I hope this young Raden will stir them up." The house-master agreed, and when he first caught sight of Colin's slim, well-knit figure, looked into the handsome kindly eyes, and heard his curiously diffident speech, his doubts vanished. "We have got the right stuff now," he told himself, and the senior for whom the new boy fagged made the same comment.

From the insignificance of fagdom Colin climbed up the School, leaving everywhere a record of honest good-nature. He was allowed to forget his football,

but in return he was initiated into the mysteries of the river. Water had always been his delight, so he went through the dreary preliminaries of being coached in a tub-pair till he learned to swing steadily and get his arms quickly forward. Then came the stages of scratch fours and scratch eights, till after a long apprenticeship he was promoted to the dignity of a thwart in the Eight itself. In his last year he was Captain of Boats, a position which joins the responsibility of a Cabinet Minister to the rapturous popular applause of a successful warrior. Nor was he the least distinguished of a great band. With Colin at seven the School won the Ladies' after the closest race on record.

The Head's prophecy fell true, for Colin was a born leader. For all his good-humour and diffidence of speech, he had a trick of shutting his teeth which all respected. As captain he was the idol of the school, and he ruled it well and justly. For the rest, he was a curious boy with none of the ordinary young enthusiasms, reserved for all his kindness. At house "shouters" his was not the voice which led the stirring strains of "Stroke out all you know," though his position demanded it. He cared little about work, and the Schoolhouse scholar, who fancied him from his manner a devotee of things intellectual, found in Colin but an affected interest. He read a certain amount of modern poetry with considerable boredom; fiction he never opened. The truth was that he had a romance in his own brain which, willy nilly, would play itself out, and which left him small relish for the pale second-hand inanities of art. Often, when with others he would lie in the deep meadows by the river on some hot summer's day, his fancies would take a curious colour. He adored the soft English landscape, the lush grasses, the slow streams, the ancient secular trees. But as he looked into the hazy green distance a colder air would blow on his cheek, a pungent smell

of salt and pines would be for a moment in his nostrils, and he would be gazing at a line of waves on a beach, a ridge of low rocks, and a shining sea-path running out to—ah, that he could not tell! The envious Cuna would suddenly block all the vistas. He had constantly the vision before his eyes, and he strove to strain into the distance before Cuna should intervene. Once or twice he seemed almost to achieve it. He found that by keeping on the top of the low rock-ridge he could cheat Cuna by a second or two, and get a glimpse of a misty something out in the west. The vision took odd times for recurring—once or twice in lecture, once on the cricket ground, many times in the fields of a Sunday, and once while he paddled down to the start in a Trials race. It gave him a keen pleasure; it was his private domain, where at any moment he might make some enchanting discovery.

At this time he began to spend his vacations at Kinlochuna. His father, an elderly ex-diplomat, had permanently taken up his abode there, and was rapidly settling into the easy life of the Scots laird. Colin returned to his native place without enthusiasm. His childhood there had been full of lonely hours, and he had come to like the warm south country. He found the house full of people, for his father entertained hugely, and the talk was of sport and sport alone. As a rule, your very great athlete is bored by Scots shooting. Long hours of tramping or crouching among heather cramp without fully exercising the body; and unless he has the love of the thing ingrained in him, the odds are that he will wish himself home. The father, in his new-found admiration for his lot, was content to face all weathers; the son found it an effort to keep pace with such vigour. He thought upon the sunlit fields and reedy watercourses with regret, and saw little in the hills but a rough waste scarred with rock and sour with mosses.

He read widely throughout these days, for his

father had a taste for modern letters, and new books lay littered about the rooms. He read queer Celtic tales which he thought "sickening rot," and mild Celtic poetry which he failed to understand. Among the guests was a noted manufacturer of fiction, whom the elder Raden had met somewhere and bidden to Kinlochuna. He had heard the tale of Colin's ancestors and the sea headland of Acharra, and one day he asked the boy to show him the place. Colin assented unwillingly, for he had been slow to visit this shrine of memories, and he did not care to make his first experiment in such company. But the gentleman would not be gainsaid, so the two scrambled through the sea-wood and climbed the low ridge which looked over the bay. The weather was mist and drizzle; Cuna had wholly hidden herself, and the bluff Acharra loomed hazy and far. Colin was oddly disappointed: this reality was a poor place compared with his fancies. His companion stroked his peaked beard, talked nonsense about Colin the Red and rhetoric about "the spirit of the misty grey weather having entered into the old tale." "Think," he cried; "to those old warriors beyond that bank of mist was the whole desire of life, the Golden City, the Far Islands, whatever you care to call it." Colin shivered, as if his holy places had been profaned, set down the man in his mind most unjustly as an "awful little cad," and hurried him back to the house.

Oxford received the boy with open arms, for his reputation had long preceded him. To the majority of men he was the one freshman of his year, and gossip was busy with his prospects. Nor was gossip disappointed. In his first year he rowed seven in the Eight. The next year he was captain of his college boats, and a year later the O.U.B.C. made him its president. For three years he rowed in the winning Eight, and old coaches agreed that in him the perfect

seven had been found. It was he who in the famous race of 18—caught up in the last three hundred yards the quickened stroke which gave Oxford victory. As he grew to his full strength he became a splendid figure of a man—tall, supple, deep-chested for all his elegance. His quick dark eyes and his kindly, hesitating manners made people think his face extraordinarily handsome, when really it was in no way above the common. But his whole figure, as he stood in his shorts and sweater on the raft at Putney, was so full of youth and strength that people involuntarily smiled when they saw him—a smile of pleasure in so proper a piece of manhood.

Colin enjoyed life hugely at Oxford, for to one so frank and well-equipped the place gave of its best. He was the most distinguished personage of his day there, but, save to school friends and the men he met officially on the river, he was little known. His diffidence and his very real fastidiousness kept him from being the centre of a host of friends. His own countrymen in the place were utterly nonplussed by him. They claimed him eagerly as a fellow, but he had none of the ordinary characteristics of the race. There were Scots of every description around him—pale-faced Scots who worked incessantly, metaphysical Scots who talked in the Union, robustious Scots who played football. They were all men of hearty manners and many enthusiasms—who quoted Burns and dined to the immortal bard's honour every 25th of January ; who told interminable Scotch stories, and fell into fervours over national sports, dishes, drinks, and religions. To the poor Colin it was all inexplicable. At the remote house of Kinlochuna he had never heard of a Free Kirk or a haggis. He had never read a line of Burns, Scott bored him exceedingly, and in all honesty he thought Scots sports inferior to southern games. He had no great love for the bleak country, he cared nothing for the traditions of his

house, so he was promptly set down by his compatriots as denationalized and degenerate.

He was idle, too, during these years as far as his "schools" were concerned, but he was always very intent upon his own private business. Whenever he sat down to read, when he sprawled on the grass at river picnics, in chapel, in lecture—in short, at any moment when his body was at rest and his mind at leisure—his fancies were off on the same old path. Things had changed, however, in that country. The boyish device of a hard road running over the waters had gone, and now it was invariably a boat which he saw beached on the shingle. It differed in shape. At first it was an ugly salmon coble, such as the fishermen used for the nets at Kinlochuna. Then it passed, by rapid transitions, through a canvas skiff which it took good watermanship to sit, a whiff, an ordinary dinghy, till at last it settled itself into a long rough boat, pointed at both ends, with oar-holes in the sides instead of rowlocks. It was the devil's own business to launch it, and launch it anew he was compelled to for every journey; for though he left it bound in a little rock hollow below the ridge after landing, yet when he returned, lo! there was the clumsy thing high and dry upon the beach.

The odd point about the new venture was that Cuna had ceased to trouble him. As soon as he had pulled his first stroke the island disappeared, and nothing lay before him but the sea fog. Yet, try as he might, he could come little nearer. The shores behind him might sink and lessen, but the impenetrable mist was still miles to the westward. Sometimes he rowed so far that the shore was a thin line upon the horizon, but when he turned the boat it seemed to ground in a second on the beach. The long laboured journey out and the instantaneous return puzzled him at first, but soon he became used to them. His one grief was the mist, which seemed to grow denser as he neared it.

The sudden glimpse of land which he had got from the ridge of rock in the old boyish days was now denied him, and with the denial came a keener exultation in the quest. Somewhere in the west, he knew, must be land, and in this land a well of sweet water—for so he had interpreted his feverish dream. Sometimes when the wind blew against him, he caught scents from it—generally the scent of pines, on the little ridge on the shore behind him.

One day on his college barge, while he was waiting for a picnic party to start, he seemed to get nearer than before. Out on that western sea, as he saw it, it was fresh, blowing weather, with a clear hot sky above. It was hard work rowing, for the wind was against him, and the sun scorched his forehead. The air seemed full of scents—and sounds, too, sounds of far-away surf and wind in trees. He rested for a moment on his oars and turned his head. His heart beat quickly, for there was a rift in the mist, and far through a line of sand ringed with snow-white foam.

Somebody shook him roughly : “ Come on, Colin, old man. They’re all waiting for you. Do you know you’ve been half asleep ? ”

Colin rose and followed silently, with drowsy eyes. His mind was curiously excited. He had looked inside the veil of mist. Now he knew what was the land he sought.

He made the voyage often, now that the spell was broken. It was short work to launch the boat, and whereas it had been a long pull formerly, now it needed only a few strokes to bring him to the Rim of the Mist. There was no chance of getting farther, and he scarcely tried. He was content to rest there, in a world of curious scents and sounds, till the mist drew down and he was driven back to shore.

The change in his environment troubled him little. For a man who has been an idol at the University to

fall suddenly into the comparative insignificance of Town is often a bitter experience ; but Colin, whose thoughts were not ambitious, scarcely noticed it. He found that he was less his own master than before, but he humbled himself to his new duties without complaint. Many of his old friends were about him ; he had plenty of acquaintances ; and being sufficient unto himself, he was unaccustomed to ennui. Invitations showered upon him thick and fast. Match-making mothers, knowing his birth and his father's income, and reflecting that he was the only child of his house, desired him as a son-in-law. He was bidden welcome everywhere, and the young girls, for whose sake he was thus courted, found in him an attractive mystery. The tall good-looking athlete, with the kind eyes and the preposterously nervous manner, wakened their maidenly sympathies. As they danced with him or sat next to him at dinner, they talked fervently of Oxford, of the north, of the army, of his friends. "Stupid, but nice, my dear," was Lady Afflint's comment ; and Miss Claire Etheridge, the beauty of the year, declared to her friends that he was a "dear boy, but so awkward." He was always forgetful, and ever apologetic ; and when he forgot the Shandwicks' theatre party, the Herapaths' dance, and at least a dozen minor matters, he began to acquire the reputation of a cynic and a recluse.

" You're a queer chap, Col," Bellew said in exasperation.

Colin shrugged his shoulders ; he was used to the description.

" Do you know that Claire Etheridge was trying all she knew to please you this afternoon, and you looked as if you weren't listening ? Most men would have given their ears to be in your place."

" I'm awfully sorry, but I thought I was very polite to her."

" And why weren't you at the Marshams' show ? "

"Oh, I went to polo with Collinson and another man. And I say, old chap, I'm not coming to the Logans to-morrow. I've got a fence on with Adair at the school."

Little Bellew, who was a tremendous mirror of fashion and chevalier in general, looked up curiously at his tall friend.

"Why don't you like the women, Col, when they're so fond of you?"

"They aren't," said Colin hotly, "and I don't dislike 'em. But, Lord! they bore me. I might be doing twenty things when I talk nonsense to one of 'em for an hour. I come back as stupid as an owl, and besides, there's heaps of things better sport."

The truth was that, while among men he was a leader and at his ease, among women his psychic balance was so oddly upset that he grew nervous and returned unhappy. The boat on the beach, ready in general to appear at the slightest call, would delay long after such experiences, and its place would be taken by some woman's face for which he cared not a straw. For the boat, on the other hand, he cared a very great deal. In all his frank wholesome existence there was this enchanting background, this pleasure garden which he cherished more than anything in life. He had come of late to look at it with somewhat different eyes. The eager desire to search behind the mist was ever with him, but now he had also some curiosity about the details of the picture. As he pulled out to the Rim of the Mist sounds seemed to shape themselves on his lips, which by-and-by grew into actual words in his memory. He wrote them down in scraps, and after some sorting they seemed to him a kind of Latin. He remembered a college friend of his, one Medway, now reading for the Bar, who had been the foremost scholar of his acquaintance; so with the scrap of paper in his pocket he climbed one evening to Medway's rooms in the Temple.

The man read the words curiously, and puzzled for a bit. "What's made you take to Latin comps so late in life, Colin? It's baddish, you know, even for you. I thought they'd have licked more into you at school."

Colin grinned with amusement. "I'll tell you about it later," he said. "Can you make out what it means?"

"It seems to be a kind of dog-Latin or monkish Latin or something of the sort," said Medway. "It reads like this: '*Soles occidere solent*' (that's cribbed from Catullus, and besides, it's the regular monkish pun) . . . *qua* . . . then *blandula* something. Then there's a lot of Choctaw, and then *illæ insulæ dilecta in quas festinant somnia animulæ gaudia*. That's pretty fair rot. Hullo, by George! here's something better—*Insula pomorum insula vitæ*. That's Geoffrey of Monmouth."

He made a dive to a bookcase and pulled out a battered little calf-bound duodecimo. "Here's all about your Isle of Apple-trees. Listen. 'Situate far out in the Western ocean, beyond the Utmost Islands, beyond even the little Isle of Sheep where the cairns of dead men are, lies the Island of Apple-trees where the heroes and princes of the nations live their second life.'" He closed the book and put it back. "It's the old ancient story, the Greek Hesperides, the British Avilion, and this Apple-tree Island is the northern equivalent."

Colin sat entranced, his memory busy with a problem. Could he distinguish the scent of apple trees among the perfumes of the Rim of the Mist? For the moment he thought he could. He was roused by Medway's voice asking the story of the writing.

"Oh, it's just some nonsense that was running in my head, so I wrote it down to see what it was."

"But you must have been reading. A new exercise for you, Colin!"

"No, I wasn't reading. Look here. You know the sort of pictures you make for yourself of places you like."

"Rather! Mine is a Yorkshire moor with a little grey shooting-box in the heart of it."

"Well, mine is different. Mine is a sort of beach with a sea and a lot of islands somewhere far out. It is a jolly place, fresh, you know, and blowing, and smells good. 'Pon my word, now I think of it, there's always been a scent of apples."

"Sort of cider-press? Well, I must be off. You'd better come round to the club and see the telegrams about the war. *You* should be keen about it."

One evening, a week later, Medway met a friend called Tillotson at the club, and, being lonely, they dined together. Tillotson was a man of some note in science, a dabbler in psychology, an amateur historian, a ripe genealogist. They talked of politics and the war, of a new book, of Mrs. Runnymede, and finally of their hobbies.

"I am writing an article," said Tillotson. "Craikes asked me to do it for the *Monthly*. It's on a nice point in psychics. I call it 'The Transmission of Fallacies,' but I do not mean the logical kind. The question is, Can a particular form of hallucination run in a family for generations? The proof must, of course, come from my genealogical studies. I maintain it can. I instance the Douglas-Ernotts, not one of whom can see straight with the left eye. That is one side. In another class of examples I take the Drapiers, who hate salt water and never go on board ship if they can help it. Then you remember the Durwards? Old Lady Balcrynie used to tell me that no one of the lot could ever stand the sight of a green frock. There's a chance for the romancer. The Manorwaters have the same madness, only their colour is red."

A vague remembrance haunted Medway's brain.

"I know a man who might give you points from his own case. Did you ever meet a man Raden—Colin Raden?"

Tillotson nodded. "Long chap—in the Guards? 'Varsity oar, and rather a useful bowler? No, I don't know him. I know him well by sight, and I should like to meet him tremendously—as a genealogist, of course."

"Why?" asked Medway.

"Why? Because the man's family is unique. You never hear much about them nowadays, but away up in that north-west corner of Scotland they have ruled since the days of Noah. Why, man, they were aristocrats when our Howards and Nevilles were greengrocers. I wish you would get this Raden to meet me some night."

"I am afraid there's no chance of it just at present," said Medway, taking up an evening paper. "I see that his battalion has gone to the front. But remind me when he comes back, and I'll be delighted."

III

And now there began for Colin a curious, divided life—without, a constant shifting of scene, days of heat and bustle and toil; within, a slow, tantalizing, yet exquisite adventure. The Rim of the Mist was now no more the goal of his journeys, but the starting-point. Lying there, amid cool, fragrant sea winds, his fanciful ear was subtly alert for the sounds of the dim land before him. Sleeping and waking, the quest haunted him. As he flung himself on his bed the kerosene-filled air would change to an ocean freshness, the old boat would rock beneath him, and with clear eye and a boyish hope he would be waiting and watching. And then suddenly he would be back on shore, Cuna and the Acharra headland shining grey in

the morning light, and with gritty mouth and sand-filled eyes he would awaken to the heat of the desert camp.

He was kept busy, for his good-humour and energy made him a willing slave, and he was ready enough for volunteer work when others were weak with heat and despair. A thirty-mile ride left him untired ; more, he followed the campaign with a sharp intelligence and found a new enthusiasm for his profession. Discomforts there might be, but the days were happy ; and then—the cool land, the bright land, which was his for the thinking of it.

Soon they gave him reconnoitring work to do, and his wits were put to the trial. He came well out of the thing, and earned golden praise from the silent colonel in command. He enjoyed it as he had enjoyed a hard race on the river or a good cricket match, and when his worried companions marvelled at his zeal he stammered and grew uncomfortable.

"How the deuce do you keep it up, Colin ?" the major asked him. "I'm an old hand at the job, and yet I've got a temper like devilled bones. You seem as chirpy as if you were going out to fish a chalk-stream on a June morning."

"Well, the fact is—" and Colin pulled himself up short, knowing that he could never explain. He felt miserably that he had an unfair advantage of the others. Poor Bellew, who groaned and swore in the heat at his side, knew nothing of the Rim of the Mist. It was rough luck on the poor beggars, and who but himself was the fortunate man ?

As the days passed a curious thing happened. He found fragments of the other world straying into his common life. The barriers of the two domains were falling, and more than once he caught himself looking at a steel-blue sea when his eyes should have found a mustard-coloured desert. One day, on a reconnoitring expedition, they stopped for a little on a

hillock above a jungle of scrub, and being hot and tired, scanned listlessly the endless yellow distances.

"I suppose yon hill is about ten miles off," said Bellew, with dry lips.

Colin looked vaguely. "I should say five."

"And what's that below it—the black patch? Stones or scrub?"

Colin was in a day-dream. "Why do you call it black? It's blue, quite blue."

"Rot," said the other. "It's grey-black."

"No, it's water with the sun shining on it. It's blue, but just at the edges it's very near sea-green."

Bellew rose excitedly. "Hullo, Col, you're seeing the mirage! And you the fittest of the lot of us! You've got the sun in your head, old man!"

"Mirage!" Colin cried in contempt. He was awake now, but the thought of confusing his own bright western sea with a mirage gave him a curious pain. For a moment he felt the gulf of separation between his two worlds, but only for a moment. As the party remounted he gave his fancies the rein, and ere he reached camp he had felt the oars in his hand and sniffed the apple-tree blossom from the distant beaches.

The major came to him after supper.

"Bellew told me you were a bit odd to-day, Colin," he said. "I expect your eyes are getting baddish. Better get your sand-spectacles out."

Colin laughed. "Thanks. It's awfully good of you to bother, but I think Bellew took me up wrong. I never was fitter in my life."

By-and-by the turn came for pride to be humbled. A low desert fever took him, and though he went through the day as usual, it was with dreary lassitude; and at night, with hot hands clasped above his damp hair, he found sleep a hard goddess to conquer.

It was the normal condition of the others, so he had

small cause to complain, but it worked havoc with his fancies. He had never been ill since his childish days, and this little fever meant much to one whose nature was poised on a needle-point. He found himself confronted with a hard bare world, with the gilt rubbed from its corners. The Rim of the Mist seemed a place of vague horrors; when he reached it his soul was consumed with terror; he struggled impotently to advance; behind him Cuna and the Acharra coast seemed a place of evil dreams. Again, as in his old fever, he was tormented with a devouring thirst, but the sea beside him was not fresh, but brackish as a rock-pool. He yearned for the apple-tree beaches in front; there, he knew, were cold springs of water; the fresh smell of it was blown towards him in his nightmare.

But as the days passed and the misery for all grew more intense, an odd hope began to rise in his mind. It could not last, coolness and health were waiting near, and his reason for the hope came from the odd events at the Rim of the Mist. The haze was clearing from the foreground, the surf-lined coast seemed nearer, and though all was obscure save the milk-white sand and the foam, yet that was earnest enough for him. Once more he became cheerful; weak and light-headed he rode out again; and the major, who was recovering from sunstroke, found envy take the place of pity in his soul.

The hope was near fulfilment. One evening when the heat was changing into the cooler twilight, Colin and Bellew were sent with a small picked body to scour the foothills above the river in case of a flank attack during the night march. It was work they had done regularly for weeks, and it is possible that precautions were relaxed. At any rate, as they turned a corner of hill, in a sandy pass where barren rocks looked down on more barren thorn thickets, a couple of rifle-shots rang out from the scarp, and above them

appeared a line of dark faces and white steel. A mere handful, taken at a disadvantage, they could not hope to disperse numbers, so Colin gave the word to wheel about and return. Again shots rang out, and little Bellew had only time to catch at his friend's arm to save him from falling from the saddle.

The word of command had scarcely left Colin's mouth when a sharp pain went through his chest, and his breath seemed to catch and stop. He felt as in a condensed moment of time the heat, the desert smell, the dust in his eyes and throat, while he leaned helplessly forward on his horse's mane. Then the world vanished for him. . . . The boat was rocking under him, the oars in his hand. He pulled and it moved, straight, arrow-like towards the forbidden shore. As if under a great wind the mist furled up and fled. Scents of pines, of apple trees, of great fields of thyme and heather, hung about him; the sound of wind in a forest, of cool waters falling in showers, of old moorland music, came thin and faint with an exquisite clearness. A second, and the boat was among the surf, its gunwale ringed with white foam, as it leaped to the still waters beyond. Clear and deep and still the water lay, and then the white beaches shelved downward, and the boat grated on the sand. He turned, every limb alert with a strange new life, crying out words which had shaped themselves on his lips and which an echo seemed to catch and answer. There were the green forests before him, the hills of peace, the cold white waters. With a passionate joy he leaped on the beach, his arms outstretched to this new earth, this light of the world, this old desire of the heart—youth, rapture, immortality.

Bellew brought the body back to camp, himself half-dead with fatigue and whimpering like a child. He almost fell from his horse, and when others took his burden from him and laid it reverently in his tent,

he stood beside it, rubbing sand and sweat from his poor purblind eyes, his teeth chattering with fever. He was given something to drink, but he swallowed barely a mouthful.

"It was some d-d-damned sharpshooter," he said. "Right through the breast, and he never spoke to me again. My poor old Col ! He was the best chap God ever created, and I do-don't care a dash what becomes of me now. I was at school with him, you know, you men."

"Was he killed outright?" asked the major hoarsely.

"N-no. He lived for about five minutes. But I think the sun had got into his head or he was mad with pain, for he d-d-didn't know where he was. He kept crying out about the smell of pine trees and heather and a lot of pure nonsense about water."

"*Dulces reminiscitur Argos,*" somebody quoted mournfully, as they went out to the desert evening.

THE ROAD FROM COLONUS

(E. M. FORSTER)

I

FOR no very intelligible reason, Mr. Lucas had hurried ahead of his party. He was perhaps reaching the age at which independence becomes valuable, because it is so soon to be lost. Tired of attention and consideration, he liked breaking away from the younger members, to ride by himself, and to dismount unassisted. Perhaps he also relished that more subtle pleasure of being kept waiting for lunch, and of telling the others on their arrival that it was of no consequence.

So, with childish impatience, he battered the animal's sides with his heels, and made the muleteer bang it with a thick stick and prick it with a sharp one, and jolted down the hillsides through clumps of flowering shrubs and stretches of anemones and asphodel, till he heard the sound of running water, and came in sight of the group of plane trees where they were to have their meal.

Even in England those trees would have been remarkable, so huge were they, so interlaced, so magnificently clothed in quivering green. And here in Greece they were unique, the one cool spot in that hard brilliant landscape, already scorched by the heat of an April sun. In their midst was hidden a tiny Khan or country inn, a frail mud building with a broad wooden balcony in which sat an old woman spinning, while a

small brown pig, eating orange peel, stood beside her. On the wet earth below squatted two children, playing some primeval game with their fingers ; and their mother, none too clean either, was messing with some rice inside. As Mrs. Forman would have said, it was all very Greek, and the fastidious Mr. Lucas felt thankful that they were bringing their own food with them, and should eat it in the open air.

Still, he was glad to be there—the muleteer had helped him off—and glad that Mrs. Forman was not there to forestall his opinions—glad even that he should not see Ethel for quite half an hour. Ethel was his youngest daughter, still unmarried. She was unselfish and affectionate, and it was generally understood that she was to devote her life to her father, and be the comfort of his old age. Mrs. Forman always referred to her as Antigone, and Mr. Lucas tried to settle down to the rôle of Œdipus, which seemed the only one that public opinion allowed him.

He had this in common with Œdipus, that he was growing old. Even to himself it had become obvious. He had lost interest in other people's affairs, and seldom attended when they spoke to him. He was fond of talking himself, but often forgot what he was going to say, and even when he succeeded, it seldom seemed worth the effort. His phrases and gestures had become stiff and set, his anecdotes, once so successful, fell flat, his silence was as meaningless as his speech. Yet he had led a healthy, active life, had worked steadily, made money, educated his children. There was nothing and no one to blame : he was simply growing old.

At the present moment, here he was in Greece, and one of the dreams of his life was realized. Forty years ago he had caught the fever of Hellenism, and all his life he had felt that could he but visit that land, he would not have lived in vain. But Athens had been dusty, Delphi wet, Thermopylæ flat, and he had

listened with amazement and cynicism to the rapturous exclamations of his companions. Greece was like England : it was a man who was growing old, and it made no difference whether that man looked at the Thames or the Eurotas. It was his last hope of contradicting that logic of experience, and it was failing.

Yet Greece had done something for him, though he did not know it. It had made him discontented, and there are stirrings of life in discontent. He knew that he was not the victim of continual ill-luck. Something great was wrong, and he was pitted against no mediocre or accidental enemy. For the last month a strange desire had possessed him to die fighting.

"Greece is the land for young people," he said to himself as he stood under the plane trees, "but I will enter into it, I will possess it. Leaves shall be green again, water shall be sweet, the sky shall be blue. They were so forty years ago, and I will win them back. I do mind being old, and I will pretend no longer."

He took two steps forward, and immediately cold waters were gurgling over his ankle.

"Where does the water come from?" he asked himself. "I do not even know that." He remembered that all the hillsides were dry ; yet here the road was suddenly covered with flowing streams.

He stopped still in amazement, saying : "Water out of a tree—out of a hollow tree? I never saw nor thought of that before."

For the enormous plane that leant towards the Khan was hollow—it had been burnt out for charcoal—and from its living trunk there gushed an impetuous spring, coating the bark with fern and moss, and flowing over the mule track to create fertile meadows beyond. The simple country-folk had paid to beauty and mystery such tribute as they could, for in the rind of the tree a shrine was cut, holding a lamp and a little picture of the Virgin, inheritor of the Naiad's and Dryad's joint abode.

"I never saw anything so marvellous before," said Mr. Lucas. "I could even step inside the trunk and see where the water comes from."

For a moment he hesitated to violate the shrine. Then he remembered with a smile his own thought—"the place shall be mine; I will enter it and possess it"—and leapt almost aggressively on to a stone within.

The water pressed up steadily and noiselessly from the hollow roots and hidden crevices of the plane, forming a wonderful amber pool ere it spilt over the lip of bark on to the earth outside. Mr. Lucas tasted it, and it was sweet, and when he looked up the black funnel of the trunk he saw sky which was blue, and some leaves which were green; and he remembered, without smiling, another of his thoughts.

Others had been before him—indeed he had a curious sense of companionship. Little votive offerings to the presiding Power were fastened on to the bark—tiny arms and legs and eyes in tin, grotesque models of the brain or the heart—all tokens of some recovery of strength or wisdom or love. There was no such thing as the solitude of nature, for the sorrows and joys of humanity had pressed even into the bosom of a tree. He spread out his arms and steadied himself against the soft charred wood, and then slowly leant back, till his body was resting on the trunk behind. His eyes closed, and he had the strange feeling of one who is moving, yet at peace—the feeling of the swimmer, who, after long struggling with chopping seas, finds that after all the tide will sweep him to his goal.

So he lay motionless, conscious only of the stream below his feet, and that all things were a stream, in which he was moving.

He was aroused at last by a shock—the shock of an arrival perhaps, for when he opened his eyes, something unimagined, indefinable, had passed over all things, and made them intelligible and good.

There was meaning in the stoop of the old woman over her work, and in the quick motions of the little pig, and in her diminishing globe of wool. A young man came singing over the streams on a mule, and there was beauty in his pose and sincerity in his greeting. The sun made no accidental patterns upon the spreading roots of the trees, and there was intention in the nodding clumps of asphodel, and in the music of the water. To Mr. Lucas, who, in a brief space of time, had discovered not only Greece, but England and all the world and life, there seemed nothing ludicrous in the desire to hang within the tree another votive offering—a little model of an entire man.

"Why, here's papa, playing at being Merlin."

All unnoticed they had arrived—Ethel, Mrs. Forman, Mr. Graham, and the English-speaking dragoon. Mr. Lucas peered out at them suspiciously. They had suddenly become unfamiliar, and all that they did seemed strained and coarse.

"Allow me to give you a hand," said Mr. Graham, a young man who was always polite to his elders.

Mr. Lucas felt annoyed. "Thank you, I can manage perfectly well by myself," he replied. His foot slipped as he stepped out of the tree, and went into the spring.

"Oh, papa, my papa!" said Ethel, "what are you doing? Thank goodness I have got a change for you on the mule."

She tended him carefully, giving him clean socks and dry boots, and then sat him down on the rug beside the lunch basket, while she went with the others to explore the grove.

They came back in ecstasies, in which Mr. Lucas tried to join. But he found them intolerable. Their enthusiasm was superficial, commonplace, and spasmodic. They had no perception of the coherent beauty that was flowering around them. He tried at least to explain his feelings, and what he said was:

"I am altogether pleased with the appearance of this place. It impresses me very favourably. The trees are fine, remarkably fine for Greece, and there is something very poetic in the spring of clear running water. The people, too, seem kindly and civil. It is decidedly an attractive place."

Mrs. Forman upbraided him for his tepid praise.

"Oh, it is a place in a thousand!" she cried. "I could live and die here! I really would stop if I had not to be back at Athens! It reminds me of the Colonus of Sophocles."

"Well, *I* must stop," said Ethel. "I positively must."

"Yes, do! You and your father! Antigone and Oedipus. Of course you must stop at Colonus!"

Mr. Lucas was almost breathless with excitement. When he stood within the tree, he had believed that his happiness would be independent of locality. But these few minutes' conversation had undeceived him. He no longer trusted himself to journey through the world, for old thoughts, old weariness might be waiting to rejoin him as soon as he left the shade of the planes and the music of the virgin water. To sleep in the Khan with the gracious, kind-eyed country-people, to watch the bats flit about within the globe of shade, and see the moon turn the golden patterns into silver—one such night would place him beyond relapse, and confirm him for ever in the kingdom he had regained. But all his lips could say was: "I should be willing to put in a night here."

"You mean a week, papa! It would be sacrilege to put in less."

"A week, then, a week," said his lips, irritated at being corrected, while his heart was leaping with joy. All through lunch he spoke to them no more, but watched the place he should know so well, and the people who would so soon be his companions and friends. The inmates of the Khan only consisted of

an old woman, a middle-aged woman, a young man and two children, and to none of them had he spoken, yet he loved them as he loved everything that moved or breathed or existed beneath the benedictory shade of the planes.

"*En route!*" said the shrill voice of Mrs. Forman. "Ethel! Mr. Graham! The best of things must end."

"To-night," thought Mr. Lucas, "they will light the little lamp by the shrine. And when we all sit together on the balcony, perhaps they will tell me which offerings they put up."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Lucas," said Graham, "but they want to fold up the rug you are sitting on."

Mr. Lucas got up, saying to himself: "Ethel shall go to bed first, and then I will try to tell them about my offering too—for it is a thing I must do. I think they will understand if I am left with them alone."

Ethel touched him on the cheek. "Papa! I've called you three times. All the mules are here."

"Mules? What mules?"

"Our mules. We're all waiting. Oh, Mr. Graham, do help my father on."

"I don't know what you're talking about, Ethel."

"My dearest papa, we must start. You know we have to get to Olympia to-night."

Mr. Lucas in pompous, confident tones replied: "I always did wish, Ethel, that you had a better head for plans. You know perfectly well that we are putting in a week here. It is your own suggestion."

Ethel was startled into impoliteness. "What a perfectly ridiculous idea. You must have known I was joking. Of course I meant I wished we could."

"Ah! if we could only do what we wished!" sighed Mrs. Forman, already seated on her mule.

"Surely," Ethel continued in calmer tones, "you didn't think I meant it."

"Most certainly I did. I have made all my plans

on the supposition that we are stopping here, and it will be extremely inconvenient—indeed, impossible—for me to start."

He delivered this remark with an air of great conviction, and Mrs. Forman and Mr. Graham had to turn away to hide their smiles.

"I am sorry I spoke so carelessly ; it was wrong of me. But, you know, we can't break up our party, and even one night here would make us miss the boat at Patras."

Mrs. Forman, in an aside, called Mr. Graham's attention to the excellent way in which Ethel managed her father.

"I don't mind about the Patras boat. You said that we should stop here, and we are stopping."

It seemed as if the inhabitants of the Khan had divined in some mysterious way that the altercation touched them. The old woman stopped her spinning, while the young man and the two children stood behind Mr. Lucas, as if supporting him.

Neither arguments nor entreaties moved him. He said little, but he was absolutely determined, because for the first time he saw his daily life aright. What need had he to return to England ? Who would miss him ? His friends were dead or cold. Ethel loved him in a way, but, as was right, she had other interests. His other children he seldom saw. He had only one other relative, his sister Julia, whom he both feared and hated. It was no effort to struggle. He would be a fool as well as a coward if he stirred from the place which brought him happiness and peace.

At last Ethel, to humour him, and not disinclined to air her modern Greek, went into the Khan with the astonished dragoman to look at the rooms. The woman inside received them with loud welcomes, and the young man, when no one was looking, began to lead Mr. Lucas's mule to the stable.

"Drop it, you brigand !" shouted Graham, who

always declared that foreigners could understand English if they chose. He was right, for the man obeyed, and they all stood waiting for Ethel's return.

She emerged at last, with close-gathered skirts, followed by the dragoman bearing the little pig, which he had bought at a bargain.

"My dear papa, I will do all I can for you, but stop in that Khan—no."

"Are there—fleas?" asked Mrs. Forman.

Ethel intimated that "fleas" was not the word.

"Well, I am afraid that settles it," said Mrs. Forman, "I know how particular Mr. Lucas is."

"It does not settle it," said Mr. Lucas. "Ethel, you go on. I do not want you. I don't know why I ever consulted you. I shall stop here alone."

"That is absolute nonsense," said Ethel, losing her temper. "How can you be left alone at your age? How would you get your meals or your bath? All your letters are waiting for you at Patras. You'll miss the boat. That means missing the London operas, and upsetting all your engagements for the month. And as if you could travel by yourself!"

"They might knife you," was Mr. Graham's contribution.

The Greeks said nothing; but whenever Mr. Lucas looked their way, they beckoned him towards the Khan. The children would even have drawn him by the coat, and the old woman on the balcony stopped her almost completed spinning, and fixed him with mysterious, appealing eyes. As he fought, the issue assumed gigantic proportions, and he believed that he was not merely stopping because he had regained youth or seen beauty or found happiness, but because in that place and with those people a supreme event was awaiting him which would transfigure the face of the world. The moment was so tremendous that he abandoned words and arguments as useless, and rested on the strength of his mighty unrevealed allies:

silent men, murmuring water, and whispering trees. For the whole place called with one voice, articulate to him, and his garrulous opponents became every minute more meaningless and absurd. Soon they would be tired and go chattering away into the sun, leaving him to the cool grove and the moonlight and the destiny he foresaw.

Mrs. Forman and the dragoman had indeed already started, amid the piercing screams of the little pig, and the struggle might have gone on indefinitely if Ethel had not called in Mr. Graham.

"Can you help me?" she whispered. "He is absolutely unmanageable."

"I'm no good at arguing—but if I could help you in any other way—" and he looked down complacently at his well-made figure.

Ethel hesitated. Then she said: "Help me in any way you can. After all, it is for his good that we do it."

"Then have his mule led up behind him."

So when Mr. Lucas thought he had gained the day, he suddenly felt himself lifted off the ground, and sat sideways on the saddle, and at the same time the mule started off at a trot. He said nothing, for he had nothing to say, and even his face showed little emotion as he felt the shade pass and heard the sound of the water cease. Mr. Graham was running at his side, hat in hand, apologizing.

"I know I had no business to do it, and I do beg your pardon awfully. But I do hope that some day you too will feel that I was—damn!"

A stone had caught him in the middle of the back. It was thrown by the little boy, who was pursuing them along the mule track. He was followed by his sister, also throwing stones.

Ethel screamed to the dragoman, who was some way ahead with Mrs. Forman, but before he could rejoin them another adversary appeared. It was

the young Greek, who had cut them off in front, and now dashed down at Mr. Lucas's bridle. Fortunately Graham was an expert boxer, and it did not take him a moment to beat down the youth's feeble defence, and to send him sprawling with a bleeding mouth into the asphodel. By this time the dragoman had arrived, the children, alarmed at the fate of their brother, had desisted, and the rescue party, if such it is to be considered, retired in disorder to the trees.

"Little devils!" said Graham, laughing with triumph. "That's the modern Greek all over. Your father meant money if he stopped, and they consider we were taking it out of their pocket."

"Oh, they are terrible—simple savages! I don't know how I shall ever thank you. You've saved my father."

"I only hope you didn't think me brutal."

"No," replied Ethel, with a little sigh. "I admire strength."

Meanwhile the cavalcade reformed, and Mr. Lucas, who, as Mrs. Forman said, bore his disappointment wonderfully well, was put comfortably on to his mule. They hurried up the opposite hillside, fearful of another attack, and it was not until they had left the eventful place far behind that Ethel found an opportunity to speak to her father and ask his pardon for the way she had treated him.

"You seemed so different, dear father, and you quite frightened me. Now I feel that you are your old self again."

He did not answer, and she concluded that he was not unnaturally offended at her behaviour.

By one of those curious tricks of mountain scenery, the place they had left an hour before suddenly reappeared far below them. The Khan was hidden under the green dome, but in the open there still stood three figures, and through the pure air rose up a faint cry of defiance or farewell.

Mr. Lucas stopped irresolutely, and let the reins fall from his hand.

"Come, father dear," said Ethel gently.

He obeyed, and in another moment a spur of the hill hid the dangerous scene for ever.

II

It was breakfast time, but the gas was alight, owing to the fog. Mr. Lucas was in the middle of an account of a bad night he had spent. Ethel, who was to be married in a few weeks, had her arms on the table, listening.

"First the door bell rang, then you came back from the theatre. Then the dog started, and after the dog the cat. And at three in the morning a young hooligan passed by singing. Oh yes: then there was the water gurgling in the pipe above my head."

"I think that was only the bath water running away," said Ethel, looking rather worn.

"Well, there's nothing I dislike more than running water. It's perfectly impossible to sleep in the house. I shall give it up. I shall give notice next quarter. I shall tell the landlord plainly, 'The reason I am giving up the house is this: it is perfectly impossible to sleep in it.' If he says—says—well, what has he got to say?"

"Some more toast, father?"

"Thank you, my dear." He took it, and there was an interval of peace.

But he soon recommenced. "I'm not going to submit to the practising next door as tamely as they think. I wrote and told them so—didn't I?"

"Yes," said Ethel, who had taken care that the letter should not reach. "I have seen the governess, and she has promised to arrange it differently. And Aunt Julia hates noise. It is sure to be all right."

Her aunt, being the only unattached member of the family, was coming to keep house for her father when she left him. The reference was not a happy one, and Mr. Lucas commenced a series of half articulate sighs, which was only stopped by the arrival of the post.

"Oh, what a parcel!" cried Ethel. "For me! What can it be? Greek stamps! This is most exciting!"

It proved to be some asphodel bulbs, sent by Mrs. Forman from Athens for planting in the conservatory.

"Doesn't it bring it all back? You remember the asphodels, father! And all wrapped up in Greek newspapers. I wonder if I can read them still. I used to be able to, you know."

She rattled on, hoping to conceal the laughter of the children next door—a favourite source of querulousness at breakfast time.

"Listen to me! 'A rural disaster.' Oh, I've hit on something sad. But never mind. 'Last Tuesday at Plataniste, in the province of Messenia, a shocking tragedy occurred. A large tree'—aren't I getting on well?—'blew down in the night and'—wait a minute—oh dear! 'crushed to death the five occupants of the little Khan there, who had apparently been sitting in the balcony. The bodies of Maria Rhomaides, the aged proprietress, and of her daughter, aged forty-six, were easily recognizable, whereas that of her grandson'—oh, the rest is really too horrid; I wish I had never tried it, and what's more I seem to have heard the name Plataniste before. We didn't stop there, did we, in the spring?'"

"We had lunch," said Mr. Lucas, with a faint expression of trouble on his vacant face. "Perhaps it was where the dragoman bought the pig."

"Of course," said Ethel in a nervous voice. "Where the dragoman bought the little pig. How terrible!"

"Very terrible!" said her father, whose attention

was wandering to the noisy children next door. Ethel suddenly started to her feet with genuine interest.

"Good gracious!" she exclaimed. "This is an old paper. It happened not lately, but in April—the night of Tuesday the eighteenth—and we—we must have been there in the afternoon."

"So we were," said Mr. Lucas. She put her hand to her heart, scarcely able to speak.

"Father, dear father, I must say it: you wanted to stop there. All those people, those poor half-savage people, tried to keep you, and they're dead. The whole place, it says, is in ruins, and even the stream has changed its course. Father, dear, if it had not been for me, and if Arthur had not helped me, you must have been killed."

Mr. Lucas waved his hand irritably. "It is not a bit of good speaking to the governess, I shall write to the landlord and say, 'The reason I am giving up the house is this: the dog barks, the children next door are intolerable, and I cannot stand the noise of running water.'"

Ethel did not check his babbling. She was aghast at the narrowness of the escape, and for a long time kept silence. At last she said: "Such a marvellous deliverance does make one believe in Providence."

Mr. Lucas, who was still composing his letter to the landlord, did not reply.

THE UNFORTUNATE SAINT

(ST. JOHN LUCAS)

THAT quaint old chronicler Gallinus Garrulus, whose long-lost treatise on the unpleasant private lives and glorious miracles of the holy men who dwelt in the Thebaïd has been discovered and edited by the erudite Doctor Schwätzer of Leipzig, tells us, in his mediocre Latin, many useful and edifying facts concerning a certain Alexander who flourished in the third century of our era, earned the universal hatred of the human race through no fault of his own but a lack of forethought, and was canonized by Innocent the First a year before Alaric and his barbarians sacked the Holy City. Alexander, who was fond of insisting that he was not descended from the heathen and dissipated monarch of that name, had originally followed the profession of a wandering tinker; tinkering, indeed, was hereditary in his family, and there is no doubt that he was either the grandson or great-grandson (Garrulus says grandson, but Schwätzer has ten pages of notes on the subject) of the celebrated coppersmith Alexander who annoyed Paul, and, as we all know, was delivered unto Satan by that irritated saint. In the course of his travels he went to Upper Egypt, where there was a considerable demand for his art, and one day, by a most fortunate chance, he entered a squalid village which was inhabited by a celibate congregation of very holy men. In this village he stayed, finding plenty of work, for

the very holy men were gloriously aloof from the practical details of life, and therefore all their pots and pans were badly in need of repair.

In spite of the essentially mundane character of his work, Alexander himself had a decided inclination towards the saintly life, and after he had sojourned for a while in the village he decided that he would stay there always, adopting holiness as his profession, and occupying his leisure with looking after the kettles, cauldrons, and pots of the Elect. Unfortunately the holiest man of all in the village, whose name was Irenæus, was a strong believer in heredity. Irenæus was bad-tempered ; even in that environment he had a famous reputation for personal uncleanliness, and his slumbers were disturbed almost nightly by the most remarkable visions. In the course of one of these the secret of Alexander's pedigree was revealed to him, and he decided at once that the tinker was a lewd fellow and quite unfit for decent society. He held a vestry meeting, and Alexander was informed that as soon as all the pots and pans were mended he was to leave the village and return no more.

Alexander was seriously annoyed when he heard of the resolution passed by the vestry meeting, for he was conscious of becoming holier every day, and life in the village, with its combination of healthy labour and an ever-growing sense of righteousness, suited him very well. Therefore, in order to prolong his sojourn, he adopted the method of the Pagan Queen Penelope, at night secretly making apertures in the pans which he had cleverly mended by day. Meanwhile his holiness increased marvellously, and he began to see visions no less important than those of Irenæus himself. But when he told Irenæus concerning them, that great and malodorous man was extremely surly, and said that in his opinion they were caused either by indigestion or by a hereditary

bad conscience. All too soon the pious fraud of Alexander was discovered : Irenæus detected him in the act of boring a large hole in a cistern, and next day at dawn the unfortunate Alexander was excommunicated and driven forth from the village with cursing and stripes.

He resumed his wandering life, but very soon his holiness and his visions became so entralling that he found himself neglecting his trade, and after a while he resolved to renounce it altogether, and to devote the rest of his days to pious meditations and righteous exercises. Even when he had been staying in the village, certain small experiments which he had made were enough to convince him that he possessed miraculous power, and as soon as he got free from the baneful proximity of Irenæus (who was always trying to spoil with a miracle of his own any mighty work attempted by Alexander), he found that this power increased an hundred-fold. His enthusiasm likewise increased, and with it the desire for renown and the determination to rise superior to that sour saint in his own favourite art. Now the miracles of Alexander, according to the testimony of the truthful but illiterate Garrulus, were as follows.

It befell that on a certain day Alexander was crossing the desert, and paused to quench his thirst and enjoy the shade in a certain oasis not far from the great city Alexandria. While he rested, he became aware of the presence of a concourse of savage and naked men, who danced and shouted and displayed every symptom of intense felicity. Alexander approached them in order to find out the reason of their joy, and perceived that they were surrounding a large lion whose fore-paws were caught in a heavy wooden trap. The lion watched their unseemly gestures with calm disdain, and uttered no sound when their leader,

a Nubian with a gross body, threw a number of little, sharp spears at him. Alexander watched the scene for some time, and then, being of a pitiful nature, his heart was moved with compassion for the poor lion, and he announced to the naked men that he intended to release him. The naked men laughed, and some of them threw stones at him, but quite good-naturedly, and they continued to dance. Then Alexander exerted his miraculous powers to the utmost extent, and at last the heavy wooden trap opened and the lion came out of it, limping because his fore-paws were severely bruised. The naked men ran away shouting, with the exception of the Nubian, who fell when he started, sprained his ankle, and lay on the ground staring at the lion and showing all the whites of his eyes. The lion walked slowly and majestically towards Alexander, who imagined that the poor beast was grateful for his miracle, but in reality (Garrulus affirms) it was his intention to eat his holy benefactor. When, however, the lion had approached Alexander, he saw that the saint was obviously bony and stringy and presumably tough; therefore he turned to the Nubian and devoured a portion of him with manifest pleasure. Then he limped away into the desert and was seen no more, and as soon as he had gone the savage, naked men beat Alexander and cut him with knives and left him, thinking he was dead. And they put the remainder of the Nubian into a small portmanteau and departed.

It was more than a month before Alexander recovered from his wounds. That he did so at all was due to the watchful care of a holy hermit who lived near the oasis and heard the story of the miracle from the savage men. In spite of his private sufferings, Alexander was greatly delighted with the success which had attended his effort, and was burning to distinguish himself further. He instructed the holy hermit to inform Irenæus by pigeon-post of all that

had happened, blessed him, and proceeded on his way.

Now when Alexander drew nigh to the opulent city Biterses, he found himself amongst a dark-skinned tribe who wore scarlet and silver turbans and drank the milk of mares, for the goat was to them an unclean animal. This people lived in a valley shut in on all sides by high hills, so that when they wished to go to the city Biterses on business, or to make any other journey, it was necessary for them first of all to cross one of the hills, and this, in inclement seasons, was a burden to them. Although they were pagans they were charitable folk, and treated Alexander with great kindness. Their women tried to induce him to drink mare's milk in large quantities in order that he might grow great-thewed like other men and no longer resemble a gnarled and withered tree, and their men invited him to become one of their gods. To a person of his singular virtue such temptations were as nothing, but nevertheless he became very fond of the people in the valley, and was always trying to think of some miracle that would have a permanently useful result for them. At last, noticing the inconvenience which they suffered from being hemmed in on all sides by lofty hills, he decided that it would be an excellent thing if one of the hills was removed, and their commerce with the rest of the world thereby rendered easy.

For several days he toiled, nor even at night did he cease from exerting his miraculous power, and at last, on the evening of the fifth day, a dreadful groaning and rumbling was heard, and one of the hills began to move slowly away from its neighbours in the circle. Soon a huge gap full of boulders and yawning pits was revealed, and the hill moved steadily on. The people of the valley were so greatly delighted that, without permission, they unanimously elected Alexander their chief god. Alexander him-

self was highly elated at the success of his effort, and dispatched a pigeon carrying an account of the miracle to Irenæus. But very soon his pride had a grievous fall, for he discovered that, though he was able to move the hill, he had not yet acquired sufficient power to stop it when once it was in motion. In spite of the most frantic efforts on the part of Alexander, the hill went majestically on across the plain, reached the great city Biterses by night, and crushed it as the foot of a giant crushes a colony of ants. Then the hill proceeded onward, and eventually disappeared into the sea, causing the highest tide ever reported on those shores and ruining the whole tunny-fishing trade for two years.

Alexander was highly gratified with the success of this miracle, though he felt sorry, from the strictly human point of view, for the people of Biterses, and got up a subscription in the district for the tunny-fishers. His fame was now immense; but as the survivors of the ruin of Biterses threatened to exterminate the dwellers in the valley if they harboured him any longer, he thought that it would be more humane to depart from the locality. He journeyed for three days, and on the evening of the third he perceived a small village surrounded by palm-trees. His recent vast success had not made him proud, and he resolved to enter the humble village and inquire if there was any scope in it for his powers.

He halted by the well in the middle of the little market-place, and whilst he was resting there two women came to draw water, one old, the other in the prime of life. He spoke to both of them, but only the old woman responded to his salutation. The young woman seemed to be quite unconscious of his presence. After a while he spoke to her again, and the old woman explained that she had been deaf and dumb from birth, and that one of the villagers, being enthralled by her great beauty, had lately married

her. Alexander was full of joy at finding a subject for his art so soon, and almost before the old woman had finished speaking he had cured the deafness of the young woman, and she began to talk like a little child. The old woman was amazed and tried to worship Alexander, but Alexander prevented her and went on his way, promising to return in a week to see if the cure was complete.

He spent the week in earnest conversation with a dropsical saint at El-gebi, and then returned to the village. As he entered the gate he heard sounds of lamentation, and presently he saw a funeral procession which escorted the body of a young man to the cemetery. He was about to restore the young man's life when it occurred to him to ask his name. The chief mourner answered him, and added that the young man had committed suicide. Alexander asked the reason for this rash and dreadful act, and the chief mourner beat his breast.

"It was our wont," he said, "to call him the Happiest on Earth; and of a truth he merited the title, for he married a wife who was beautiful and deaf and dumb. But on an evil day she met a sorcerer who gave her speech and hearing, and since that time she has talked and stormed and railed without ceasing. Wherefore we bear to an untimely grave the body of him who was called the Happiest on Earth."

Alexander, having heard the remarks of the chief mourner, walked thoughtfully away and neglected to restore life to the body of the young man. And as he went through the village, a stout man in white raiment followed him, and when they were come to a lonely place, pulled his sleeve. And the stout man said to Alexander, "Without any doubt you are the famous sorcerer who healed the deaf-mute. Nay, deny it not, for the old woman who was present at the well has herself pointed you out to me."

Alexander said : " I am no sorcerer, but a worker of holy miracles."

" That," responded the stout man, " is neither here nor there. I am a physician, and my richest patient is on the point of death, whereby I suffer discredit and financial loss to boot. Therefore I am come to beg your assistance, for I am confident that you can heal him."

Alexander was reluctant to consent, for the worldly interests of the physician shocked him. But the physician importuned him so volubly that at length he was persuaded, and together they went to the bedside of the sick man.

They found him already in the article of death. His bed was surrounded by relatives and friends, who displayed fewer signs of grief than are customary on such lamentable occasions. The physician went to the dying man and administered a strong potion, whilst Alexander held aloof and exerted his miraculous power. In a short time the sick man arose from his bed, stared at the relatives and friends, cursed them heartily, and demanded food and wine. The physician uttered a loud cry of joy, whereat the relatives and friends fell upon him and beat him severely. Some of them fell upon the sick man also, but he drove them away with mighty blows of his fist, and went out of the death-chamber. Then the physician, who was almost swooning with pain and fear, cried out that Alexander, and not he himself, was the author of the miracle ; whereat they all with one accord turned upon Alexander and beat him and tore off his raiment and thrust him naked from the village. On the outskirts he met the funeral procession returning from the cemetery ; and when the mourners saw him they also fell upon him and beat him, either for sport or because his appearance offended their sense of decency.

After this Alexander departed into another country.

He healed his wounds with the help of an ointment which he made from various herbs ; for though his faith was very great he found that it was insufficient to cure the ailments and bruises of his own body. Now it happened that the country into which he passed was ruled over by a king who was mad, and spent all his days in playing the flute, and sailing little boats made of paper, and painting strange pictures on whitened walls. His court was filled with musicians, poets, sculptors, and other children of the Devil, and he lived with them in a beautiful garden full of orange groves and fountains, leaving the affairs of the state entirely in the hands of his Ministers. The Ministers were honest and the country flourished exceedingly, so that the people were contented and loved their king, who was kind though very mad.

When Alexander arrived in the country he found that no one knew his name, and that the people were so prosperous and healthy that there really seemed to be no scope for his art. He informed them that he was a worker of miracles, but they merely laughed and replied that he was welcome, but would have been more welcome if he had been a grand sculptor or a cunning flute-player. This offended Alexander, and he attempted to perform some small miracles at once ; but because his pride was injured and his temper bad they were failures, and therefore the people looked upon him as a harmless but slightly tedious lunatic, and the little children made a song about him, in which the name Alexander rhymed with gander. At least it would have done so if the song had been in the English tongue. The holy saint was exceedingly irritated when he found that no one would take him seriously, and he resolved to work a miracle of the most convincing and dramatic kind. He meditated for many days, and then he decided that nothing could be more salutary to the country

or more glorious to himself than to heal the poor king of his madness.

Even to one of his extreme holiness the task was difficult, for the king's strange malady was of many years' standing. Alexander toiled for several weeks without any apparent result, and then at last the king gave up playing the flute and took to hunting. He compelled the great sculptors and musicians who thronged his court to share his new pleasure ; and they, being unused to such a life, were inept, and fell off their horses. The philosophers from Greece were especially ridiculous. After a while the king became angry with them, and dismissed them from his service, and captains and politicians took their places. The king became quite sane, and began to take a keen interest in the affairs of his country, even to the extent of hanging and imprisoning Ministers who seemed to him to be stupid. He developed a great enthusiasm for the art of war ; ordained that there should be universal military service throughout the land, and attacked and conquered a neighbouring country, treating the vanquished with intense severity. His other neighbours, fearing that he would conquer them one by one, proclaimed an alliance against him ; there was a long and sanguinary war in which thousands of lives were lost, hundreds of homes left desolate, and the peaceful face of the country was scarred and blackened. At the end of it all the land became a vassal state, the survivors were overwhelmed with taxes, and the king was chained in a dungeon for the remainder of his life. All the people sighed for the pleasant days when they had prospered under the rule of a madman, and execrated the name of Alexander, who, at the outset, had unfortunately made public the part which he played in the affair. It was with difficulty that he escaped their vengeance.

Then a terrible thing happened to Alexander.

Instead of the nightly consolation of beatific visions he was haunted continually by the cries of wounded men, of homeless women and children, and by the anguished face of the king who had once been mad and now was sane. And it seemed to him that every night an angel with dusky wings and a sword that was bright with blood stood by his bed and showed him a battlefield covered with dead and dying, and held the sword towards him, saying, "This is your work, Alexander, therefore rejoice." And when the angel vanished a devil appeared in his place, and patted Alexander on the back, saying, "Bravo, bravo!" He, at any rate, was no mere vision, for Alexander found the marks of infernal fingers printed plainly on his shoulder next morning. Alexander became very sad, and his nerves got into a terrible state, so that the visions became more and more poignant. And when he had thought carefully about his whole career he beat his breast and wept, crying, "Certainly I am the scourge of the world and an emissary of the devil who complimented me so sincerely on my achievements, for I seek to do good, and always nothing but evil and bloodshed and human misery follows. This is the punishment of my pride, and of my desire to triumph over Irenæus, to whom, on every occasion, I have been careful to send a pigeon bearing an account of my achievement. I will attempt one more miracle, and if it harms even a single poor animal I shall know it for a sign that my work is not pleasing to Heaven, and I will return to my former trade. For truly it is better to be the meanest mender of pots and to mend them well than to be the greatest saint whose miracles cause ruin and the shedding of blood."

And he went and dwelt amongst a tribe of fishermen who lived on the border of a great lake, and helped them in their fishing, and wrought no miracle for many months.

Now, the tribe depended entirely for its livelihood on the fish that inhabited the lake. And it befell that in the autumn a plague arose amongst the fish and they all died, whereupon the inhabitants of the surrounding villages suffered terrible privations and were likely to starve. Alexander, that holy man, felt that the moment for his help had arrived, and that he had at last found the chance of performing a miracle which could hurt none and would be advantageous to all. He debated within himself as to the form which it should take ; at first he decided to replenish the lake with miraculous fish, but he soon discovered that this was a task beyond his powers. He was still in doubt when, as he chanced to go a short journey, he found that there was a second great lake situated some five miles away from the other : it was teeming with fish, but the right of capturing them was jealously guarded by the folk who dwelt on its borders. Alexander thought over the affair very carefully, and decided that if half the fish in the second lake could be miraculously induced to glide or wriggle over the intervening land, which was low and marshy (*ager paludosus et jacens*, says Garrulus), into the first, no one would incur damage and many lives would be saved. The miracle succeeded admirably ; half the total number of fish in one lake left it at sunset, floundered gallantly along all night and soon after dawn next day flopped thankfully into the other. The starving fishermen spent the whole day capturing them in nets, and extolled the virtue and wisdom of Alexander. Alexander was delighted with his success, but on this occasion he refrained from sending a pigeon to Irenæus.

Alas for Alexander ! his joy was terribly brief. No sooner had the people of the district eaten the fish which had made that wonderful journey than they were overcome by a rare and painful sickness, which also afflicted the sojourners in cities to which they

sent a great part of their draughts. It seems Alexander was ignorant that there were two species of fish in the distant lake, one edible and wholesome, the other poisonous ; and when he commanded the fish to leave the waters a great number of the poisonous kind dutifully obeyed him. No one died of the sickness which they caused, but many persons were extremely ill and suffered fierce torment in the region of the belly. Alexander became painfully unpopular and went in danger of his life, until a committee of the oldest fishermen decided that he should not be slain, but that he should be banished for ever from their country. And being desirous of carrying out this decree in a manner humiliating to the saint, they wrapped him tightly in a long and evil-smelling fishing-net and rolled him out of their village as if he were a cask.

When Alexander at last broke free from the net he found that he was covered with bruises and unable to stand. But the soreness of his body was as nothing in comparison with the melancholy of his mind, and he was tempted to regret that the fishermen had permitted him to live. He crawled into a little coppice that was on the edge of the road, and then he fell on his knees and beat his breast and bewailed his evil fortune. It was plain at last, he thought, that his miracles were not acceptable to Heaven, and that he ought to have remained a mediocre and worldly tinker. He cursed the spiritual pride which had led him to seek renown and to dispatch vainglorious messages by pigeon-post to Irenæus on every possible occasion, and he solemnly renounced the miraculous art for ever. After this, being utterly weary and sore, he slept.

And whilst he was deep in slumber he saw a vision of an angel, marvellously bright, with silver wings, and eyes full of pity. Alexander begged the angel to depart, assuring him that he had got into company

unfit for any heavenly and respectable personage. But the angel only smiled, and said, "Alexander, I am sent to tell you that you are on no account to be depressed and to become a tinker. For though you have been a fool you are not to imagine that you are not a good man and even a saint. The combination of folly and saintliness is not so rare as many people imagine it to be."

Alexander felt slightly consoled by the words of the angel, though he thought privately that the tone adopted by his heavenly visitor was a trifle pompous.

"Then I am to continue to perform miracles?" he asked.

The angel shook his head and smiled again.

"No," said the angel. "You are, as I said, a good man, Alexander, and have lived down the evil reputation of your family with fair success. But for a worker of miracles goodness alone is not sufficient. There is another quality which is indispensable to him —a quality which you will never possess to any great extent. Therefore you must work no more miracles."

Alexander sighed, for in spite of his previous renunciation his art was dear to him. "What is this quality which I lack?" he asked. "If I had been told of it earlier I would have cultivated it. What is its name on earth?"

"Its name," replied the angel, "is a sacred name. I will not breathe it now, but I have written it down, and after I have gone you may read it. And when you have read it, remember through all your life that without it all good works are worthless." And he handed him a visiting-card with the blank side uppermost.

"I know what it is," said Alexander pettishly, for his bruises were hurting him, and he was somewhat irritated by the superior airs of the angel. "I know perfectly well what it is," he continued; "it's charity. But I am seething with charity."

The angel smiled. "Charity is not the word," he said.

"Then it's faith," said Alexander. "But I've got faith too. Didn't I move the mountain? I don't believe that you have really studied the history of my career."

"I know it all by heart," answered the heavenly messenger, "for I, O Alexander, am your guardian angel. But even a guardian angel is of little avail unless you possess the quality written on my card. Good-evening, Alexander."

"Oh! good-night," said Alexander, not very politely. The angel vanished, and Alexander turned the card. On it was written in golden letters one short word. And the word was TACT.

Alexander wrought no more miracles, but he became famous as a worker amongst the poor, the sick, and the sorrowful. He kept up his tinkering, but purely as a hobby, and from being the most hated person in the Thebaïd he became immensely beloved by every one. All through his life, says Garrulus, it was noticed that he could not eat fish, and had a dislike (if dislike could exist in so charitable a breast) of talkative women. He founded, indeed, the first of the great Silent Orders, of which the members were for many centuries recruited mainly from the more loquacious of the two sexes; and when he was Archimandrite of Ethiopia he evinced a keen interest in institutions for the deaf and dumb, strictly forbidding any workers of miracles to approach within two miles of them. He is also famous as the first of the early Fathers who showed any symptoms of toleration for the fine arts; and caused, indeed, a great scandal in the Council of Ecbatana by asserting that a love of the beautiful was not invariably fatal to salvation, and that it might even wean the mind of its possessor from the lusts and cruelties of a

bloodthirsty world,—a heresy which caused the venerable Patriarch of Cappadocia to dash his mitre on the floor and call (an unheard-of request in that environment) for soap and water. In short, Alexander became an excellent, practical person, and proved by his own example that more good may be accomplished by one life spent in active devotion to others than by all the miracles of a hundred shortsighted mystics. For a further account of his deeds I must refer the reader to the effete but amusing Latin of *Garrulus*, which dances a sprightly minuet through the pages of Doctor Schwätzer's edition, with the long-drawn notes of that celebrated pedant acting as a kind of ponderous ground-bass. It is suspected that a certain tomb in the beautiful Aliscamps of Arles formerly contained the mortal remains of Alexander. A broken bucket which is carved on the side of the sarcophagus beneath an Archimandrite's *cappa* lends weight to this theory, which is strongly supported by such solemn authorities as Professor Steinharterzigkeit and Mr. Theodore Andrea Cook.

THE END

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